



No. CCLXXII.]

Contents

[JUNE 1905

PAGE

Wild Wheat 97

By M. E. FRANCIS (Mrs. Francis Blundell)
Chapters XV.-XVII.

A Distinguished Librarian 117

By M. E. LOWNDES

Selina's Wedding Garment 131

By C. F. MARSH

The Girl who isn't There 147

By MAY KENDALL

Quartermaster-Sergeant Penhall 149

By G. STANLEY ELLIS

A Tenant Farmer's Diary of the Eighteenth Century 154

By W. M. DUNNING

Not among the Immortals 165

By ELLEN ADA SMITH

The South-west Wind 177

By A. T. JOHNSON

At the Sign of the Ship 183

By ANDREW LANG

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(MRS. FRANCIS BLUNDELL).

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Then gi'e woone cheir,
D'ye hear? woone cheir!"*

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE 1905.*

Wild Wheat.

BY M. E. FRANCIS (MRS. FRANCIS BLUNDELL),

AUTHOR OF 'FIANDER'S WIDOW,' 'THE MANOR FARM,'
'LYCHGATE HALL, ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

PROBATION-TIME.

NOW began that phase of Peter's life on which he subsequently looked back as on a dream. He only seemed to live during those few minutes snatched at dusk beneath the beech-tree when, like another Diana, Nathalie condescended to her lowly lover. And the bliss of those moments was dream-like too—unreal, evanescent, never failing to leave behind a sense of unsatisfied longing.

Sometimes Nathalie was gracious, and then the poor fellow's heart swelled within him with pride and triumph; he was beginning to make way with her, he told himself; the hour of complete conquest could not be far off; the love, which gained in passion and intensity every day, must produce some answering warmth in her.

At such times Peter would lie on the grass at her feet, scarcely speaking, but gazing—gazing with those ardent eyes of his which were always pleading dumbly for the gift that she withheld. And Nathalie would fold her small hands composedly in her lap, and contemplate him gravely in return, the lines of her face gentle, yet inscrutable. She was like a small, soft Sphinx, perpetually propounding a riddle which Peter could not divine. Nevertheless, when she was in such moods as these, Peter was deliriously happy.

Just to see her—just to be near her! To take note of how the sunbeams, sliding down the tree trunk, crept over her face, and of how that fine skin of hers showed flawless in answer to the test; to see how her hair wavered in the light breeze, to watch her hands clasped with such placid grace—how miraculously white they were! Now and then to be granted a word or two—a phrase, that would have been insignificant on any other lips, but that, coming from her, was fraught with deep and delicious meaning. Was not this bliss enough? If only it did not leave such a void behind!

But Nathalie was not always in this pleasant, if impassive, frame of mind. Sometimes she was peevish, petulant, almost harsh, dashing to the ground the delicately reared structure of Peter's hopes by a glance from her blue eyes. Those glances made Peter shiver; he seemed to read in them aversion. And though by no spoken word did she condemn his aspirations he would go home downcast, chiding himself for his folly in daring to think she would ever stoop to him.

Other trials, too, fell to his lot.

One morning, as he chanced to be walking along the road, returning from some errand to the village, a familiar hoof-beat fell upon his ear, and turning, he saw Tess—his own Tess—clothed and hooded and bestridden by a strange man. As Peter stood still the creature also stopped abruptly, whinnying with delight, and thrusting her soft nose almost into his face.

'Hullo! what's this?' cried the rider. 'The beast seems to know you.'

'Oh, yes, she knows me well enough,' responded Peter, steadying his voice with difficulty. 'I had a good deal to say to her when she was a young one.'

'Well, she's a nice mare,' conceded the other; 'she ought to be, too. My boss has given a nice price for her.'

'She's been sold, then?' rejoined Peter huskily; 'the folks yonder have sold her?'

'Sold, right enough; but no need to pull such a long face. It'll be a rise in the world for her. We don't have no rubbish at the—Stud.'

'Oh, that's all right,' responded Peter, vaguely.

He pulled down Tess's head and kissed her once, twice, between her velvet nostrils; and then, turning abruptly, vaulted over the park wall.

He heard the man give a whistle of astonishment, and the dancing tread of Tess's hoofs fall once more on the highway. He

stood listening till the sound of them had died away in the distance, and then set forth on his daily round with his heart bursting within him. That they should sell Tess—his Tess!—the beautiful high-mettled creature who had been bred on their own land, broken by Peter's own hands, who had answered to his voice like a dog, who had recognised him even now in his strange, uncouth garb; Tess, who might have lived in the familiar place for another score of years, and left valuable descendants to recall her memory—that they should sell her to strangers! Surely no reason could have actuated the authorities at home except the desire to be rid of everything that could remind them of himself.

'I should think they will shoot Speed,' he groaned; but in his heart he knew he lied; and the fancied picture of Speed stalking obediently at Godfrey's heel, curled up at Godfrey's feet, gazing into Godfrey's eyes, was even more distasteful to him.

Another day he caught sight of his mother standing outside the village shop. He gazed at her for a moment, but as soon as her eyes met his she turned about and hastened in the opposite direction.

He made a point of attending Service on Sunday at a distant village, so that his presence might not distress his relations or the Rector; and once the latter, meeting him, had taken him to task for deserting his own parish church.

Peter made no attempt to defend himself, but the bitterness within him increased and strengthened.

It was noticeable that when he returned home, sick at heart or gloomy, Prue—who seemed to divine his mood by instinct—would avoid talking to him, and would sit very quiet in her corner until the moment came when she could testify her sympathy by the performance of some little unobtrusive service, such as the filling of his pipe or the mending of a rent in his coat. Sometimes, indeed, Peter would go out of doors to smoke, and then Prue would accompany him; and though she seldom spoke, unless he spoke to her, her presence cheered him. When he returned home joyful, Prue would be gay too; she would laugh and chatter during supper, but in the evening she lingered by her mother's side.

One evening, when the interview between the lovers had been of peculiarly short duration, Peter, returning from the trysting-place, came upon the keeper's daughter stationed at the entrance to the narrow path. She started when she saw him, and seemed confused.

'What are you doing here?' he asked sharply.

'I am keeping watch,' she returned; 'I thought somebody might pass this way and disturb you—and the lady. I always come here, but I generally slip off before you come back.'

Peter gazed at her, uncertain whether to be pleased or annoyed by this unsolicited attention.

'I couldn't possibly hear your talk,' went on Prue, flushing quickly; 'but I like to fancy I'm doing something to help you, and it's so lovely to stand here and think of it.'

Peter smiled, though he felt oddly disconcerted.

'Oh, yes,' continued Prue, clasping her hands impetuously. 'I keep on thinking of it, and trying to picture it to myself—you two loving each other so much, and so happy together! You are not vexed, Mr. Hounsell?'

'No, I'm not vexed, but I—you are a very odd little maid, Prue!'

'You see,' she hastened to explain, 'I'm so far off, and the trees are so thick that even if I tried to look I couldn't see; but I always stand with my back towards you. See near this big sycamore-tree. I like this big tree. See how this forked branch sticks out—I always stand here—just opposite it. You don't mind my doing it, do you, Mr. Hounsell?'

'No,' said Peter doubtfully; then, as her face fell, he added more kindly, 'I think it is very good of you to act as our sentry.'

She cheered up at this, and her face lost its anxious expression; nevertheless, as she paced along at his side, she stole many questioning glances at him, uncertain as to whether her assiduity in his service had not really provoked rather than gratified him.

She continued, however, to repair to her post, and the advisability of her doing so was presently demonstrated, for as he and Nathalie sat side by side one evening, Prue's voice rang out close to them:

'Where be goin', father?' it cried. 'There's something round here I want to show 'ee. 'Tis a nest—but I can't tell what kind o' bird's it be?'

'Another time, my maid,' responded the keeper's tones, also very near.

'No, no; I want you to see it now. I've run a long way arter ye a-purpose.'

'Well, then,' conceded Meadway; and the tramp of his great feet was heard gradually receding.

'I must go!' cried Nathalie, jumping up hastily. 'How lucky

that girl chanced to be near here. I shouldn't have liked her father to have come upon us.'

'Yes, was it not lucky?' agreed Peter, without, however, revealing that Prue's presence was not accidental. Nathalie was so reserved, in a way so haughty, she might resent the fact that the keeper's daughter shared their secret, and kept watch over them from choice.

Nevertheless, that same evening he congratulated Prue, and was amused and touched at her evident delight.

She interested him in more ways than one; he had not been long in discovering that she was extremely intelligent, but, as was natural under the circumstances, absolutely ignorant of life and the world. She read a great deal, there being a fairly good parish library at her disposal, and Peter gratified her by supplementing this with occasional volumes from his own store. Her criticisms of what she read, and the construction which she put on things in general, were quaint and diverting in the extreme, and he frequently amused himself by drawing her out.

He looked on her at first as a mere child, but a little incident which occurred one evening revealed another side to her character. Returning as usual from meeting Nathalie, and walking, it must be supposed, more cautiously than was his wont, he caught sight of the faithful little sentry on duty by her sycamore-tree. She was not aware of his approach, and in consequence did not turn her head; Peter perceiving this, took pains to advance noiselessly, and presently saw her stretch out her arms hesitatingly towards the forked bough of the sycamore, and drop her hands lightly on to its wide leaves. At the same time she tilted her head a little backwards, and smiled very sweetly and tenderly, her face lighting up the while.

'What is the child doing?' thought Peter to himself.

Prue, still smiling, let her hands linger on the forked bough; her lips moved; she was evidently enacting some little drama known only to herself.

A twig cracked beneath Peter's foot, and the spell was broken. She quickly withdrew her hands, and whisked round, her face suffused with blushes, her eyes hardly daring to meet his.

'Why, what is the matter, Prue,' he cried. 'What have you been playing at?'

Prue was dumb.

'Well, you needn't tell me if you don't like,' resumed he; 'but I don't see why you should look so guilty.'

He spoke laughingly, but the girl grew more and more confused. Turning quickly from him, she began to stammer out a series of hasty and disconnected remarks, about the fineness of the evening, and what a pity it was the nightingales had ceased to sing; and—yes, this certainly was her favourite tree. Was it not a large one? And just look at these great leaves! Her fingers dropped again on to the extremities of the forked bough.

‘They are like green hands,’ she said.

Peter instantly divined her secret.

Having no actual lover, and no prospect of ever finding one to her mind, Prue, standing on the outskirts of another couple’s romance, had comforted herself by playing at one of her own. Her big tree was an imaginary sweetheart; the forked bough, strong arms stretched forth to woo her; the leaves, hands which in fancy closed on hers; her lips had moved to who knew what words of tenderness, invented by herself.

Peter began to laugh; but suddenly catching a fuller glimpse of the shrinking, quivering face, he exclaimed: ‘Poor little maid!’

He came down very early one September morning, after having passed a restless and unhappy night, and stole out into the quiet of the woods in the hope of calming himself before the labours of the day. After making a few paces he caught sight of Prue advancing quickly towards him.

‘I am so glad you have come out,’ she cried joyously. ‘I want to show you something. ’Tis the prettiest sight! I have been watching for a long time; do come and see it too.’

Her eyes were bright, eager even, in the shadowy light. As he stood gazing at her dully, without replying, she slid her hand impatiently into his—a little warm hand, frank and fearless as that of a child. His own fingers involuntarily grasped it for a moment, but suddenly he dropped it as though it stung him. Prue gazed at him, deeply abashed.

‘I’m so sorry,’ she murmured. ‘I didn’t mean—I wasn’t thinking. Please forgive me, Mr. Hounsell, I didn’t mean to be forward.’

‘You are not forward, Prue,’ he answered quickly. ‘It is I who am a surly fellow. But the fact is, I am feeling very sore—sore and put out. I’ll tell you about it, and then you’ll forgive me. Last night I took hold of other little hands—her hands—’

Prue nodded.

‘They were icy cold, and I thought she would let me warm them in mine, but she snatched them away—with such a look.’

Prue drew a step nearer, gazing at him wistfully.

'I couldn't sleep all night for thinking of it,' he continued, 'and when you put your hand in mine so kindly and confidently—you, who care nothing at all about me—it was more than I could bear.'

'It's quite different, though,' said Prue, after a pause. 'She's not anyways like me. She's—she's—oh, she might be a queen, a fairy queen. You know I always say she's like a fairy queen—and I'm just an ordinary girl.'

'You are my kind little comforter,' said he. 'Give me your hand again, my dear, and lead me wherever you like.'

As she hesitated, he took possession of the little brown hand once more, and Prue piloted him in silence through the wood into a sort of clearing at some distance from the cottage, where, posting him beside a group of fir-trees, she pointed out to him the antics of a family of fox-cubs which were at play amid tree-stumps and bracken.

Though Peter watched them with the eyes of a connoisseur, his mind was busy with other thoughts. Prue's chance phrase lingered there as words of hers often did. 'She might be a fairy queen; I am an ordinary girl.' Yes, that was just the difference between them. Nathalie was elf-like in her mysteriousness, her elusiveness, the very quality of her beauty; while Prue—little Prue—was brown, and warm, and kindly—a very child of earth. No mysteries about Prue, no haughtiness; on the contrary, she was always ready with as prompt and whole-hearted a response to an encouraging word or a kind look as was bountiful Nature to return a hundred-fold the seed dropped into her bosom. But Prue and he cared nothing for each other, and his whole existence hung balanced on the brittle thread of Nathalie's favour.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIFTEENTH OF NOVEMBER.

WHEN the weather grew colder, Peter's interviews with his beloved were necessarily shorter and rarer. As she steadily refused to meet him after dusk, they had perforce to snatch a few moments at odd times, whenever he could escape from the keeper's company, the trysts becoming ever more irregular as the season advanced. Often, as she stood by his side with the penetrating autumn blast

circling round her, while the withered leaves fell in showers to join their sodden comrades of last year which lay dark beneath her feet, often—very often—did Nathalie reproach Peter for the cruelty which thus exposed her to so much discomfort.

‘If you really loved me you would not wish me to suffer,’ she said to him once.

And then, Peter, with a sinking heart, promised to be unselfish; and for three whole days his heart went starving for want of her presence.

When next she vouchsafed to meet him he greeted her joyfully.

‘I have found a shelter for you,’ he cried. ‘A deserted hut—a shooting hut among the firs at the end of the north plantation. Nobody else goes there, and I have made it quite snug for you. Come, let me take you there!’

She acquiesced, shivering; and Peter’s face fell as he noted how unwillingly she turned in the direction indicated. But then, how pinched and pale she was! Nurtured as she had been in warm lands, the keen, raw air of the English autumn robbed her no doubt of spirit and elasticity. She was right; it was barbarous of him to force her to wander in the damp woods when she might at least find comfort by the hearth. Yet how could he ever hope for a favourable answer to that momentous question which was to decide his fate, if they had no opportunities of meeting? And perhaps, after all, when she saw the hut——

But when Nathalie glanced round it, it was with an expression of disdain, not to say disgust. Peter had, indeed, swept out the place, and had lit a fire of sticks and fir-cones on the blackened hearthstone; but this well-meant attention had not been happy in its results, for puffs of acrid smoke issued forth every now and then from the mouldering chimney, almost suffocating them.

He had further improvised a bench, which tilted up at every incautious movement. Nathalie laughed sardonically after this had happened once or twice.

‘You call this snug!’ she exclaimed. ‘You must have strange ideas of comfort. I wonder,’ she continued, after a pause, ‘if you ever do marry, what sort of home you will provide for your future wife?’

Peter began to stammer some inarticulate reply, his heart in his eyes, his hands trembling as he stretched them towards her. If *she* were his wife, he essayed to say, he would ransack the world for her pleasure.

‘Don’t let your imagination fly away with you,’ resumed she

drily. 'It is not a question of what you *would* do, but what you *could* do. You have only your own exertions to depend on—is it not so? And good will does not count for much. What sort of home would yours be? A cottage in the country with four rooms, and a pig-sty at the back, or else lodgings in a town—furnished lodgings, with somebody else's grease spots on the carpet, and somebody else's scratches in the wall-paper.'

'Nevertheless, if you loved me——' began Peter.

He broke off, not trusting himself to speak further. His young face was set in harsh, stern lines. Yet it was at such moments as these, if he but knew it, that he came nearest to touching Nathalie's heart.

'I am trying to love you!' she exclaimed, softening. 'Should I be here, if I was not? I want to love you,' she added with real earnestness.

And then Peter banished resentment, and worshipped as usual with all his soul.

As her birthday drew near, both grew more restless. Nathalie seemed pensive, even sad; she frequently talked of former days, but in a veiled way that awakened curiosity and left him mystified.

Once she said: 'I almost wish I had not promised to give you your answer on my birthday; I hate my birthday—*now*, though I used to love it. I was so much spoilt—it was a regular feast for me. I used to have so many presents, and flowers! Such flowers! When I woke in the morning I found great bunches of them waiting for me. Ah, well!'

She sighed.

'Are you so fond of the good things of life?' inquired he, a little roughly.

'I am fond of good things,' she replied imperturbably; 'and of other things, too, that are perhaps not good. But this birthday—what will it bring me? Middle age—at twenty-six one is no longer in one's first youth—and grey skies and cold winds, and a cross, frowning lover. If you could see yourself now, and what a fierce face you make! Bah! I wonder I do not send you away once and for ever!'

'But you will not send me away, Nathalie?' he pleaded, all gentleness again, all palpitating hope.

Then Nathalie, with a little laugh, promised she would wait a little.

Peter acted on the hint she had unintentionally given him, and

wrote to London for a box of flowers which cost him his week's wages. Very early on the morning of the great day he despatched Prue to the big house with instructions to obtain access to the younger Miss Manvers by some means or other, and lay his gift before her.

He waited eagerly for her return, and saw with joy that she came back empty-handed.

'Well,' he cried as she drew near, 'she took my flowers?'

'Yes, she took them,' answered the girl, who looked disturbed, and by no means elated.

'Go on—what did she say?'

'She was in bed,' returned Prue, still without enthusiasm; 'but she sat up in a minute when I came in, and she cried out with joy when she opened the box.'

'Well?' he queried impatiently, as she paused.

'She turned over the flowers, and smelt them, and kissed them; her cheeks were quite red, and she clapped her hands, and she kept calling out in some queer foreigner's talk.'

'But didn't you tell her they came from me?' interrupted Peter.

'She looked up at me all at once,' narrated Prue, 'quite surprised, I think, to find me standing there, and she asked me who I was, and I said I was "Keeper Meadway's maid," and then she looked back at me sharp: "Where did these flowers come from?" she asked. So then I told her what you did bid me to say, Mr. Hounsell, "From one who loves you." And she looked at me still with her eyes shining, and her lips parted as if she wanted me to say something more, so I said: "Can't you guess, miss?" So then she said: "But how do you come to bring them?" So I thought maybe she was vexed at my knowing anything about it, and I said: "He lodges in our house, you know, miss." And then she dropped back on her pillows and looked at me a long time, silent-like, and then she sighed. "Poor fellow!" she said, "he is very faithful! It was a kind thought." And she took a ribbon from the table near her and gave it to me, and I came away.'

'That's all right,' cried Peter joyously. 'You are a splendid little messenger—you remember every word. What was it she said, Prue? Tell me again?'

"He is very faithful!" repeated Prue, in a monotonous voice. "It was a kind thought." Yes, and she said she thanked you from her heart.'

'Did she?' cried the lad, his face irradiated.

'I think mother wants me now,' said Prue, turning towards the house.

She walked very sedately till she reached the kitchen, and then, finding herself alone, gave vent to her feelings. She stamped her small foot and shook her fist; and drawing from her pocket a length of delicate blue ribbon she threw it into the fire, poking it down viciously amid the coals. After this outburst she became pensive, and stood for a moment or two looking sorrowfully down at the hearth; presently she shook her head with a deep sigh.

'It's too bad,' said Prue, 'it really is too bad.'

The fifteenth of November fell that year on a Saturday, at which Peter rejoiced, for he found himself free in the afternoon.

He waited long, however, at the entrance to the hut before Nathalie made her appearance; and when, at last, he saw her coming, he did not dare to go and meet her.

Without greeting him, she at once entered the hut, walking gingerly on the uneven floor. The fire burnt brightly that day, emitting a pleasant resinous odour; and she drew near to it, stretching out her hands, and shivering as if cold.

Peter came up to her, fixing her with his eager gaze; but she did not glance at him.

'It is to be "No," I suppose?' he exclaimed at length, jerking out the words in a choked voice.

Then Nathalie straightened herself and looked at him.

'On the contrary,' she said, with a faint smile, 'it is to be "Yes."'

He could hardly believe his ears; the revulsion of feeling was so great that he positively reeled, and leaned for a moment against the wall to steady himself.

'You really mean it?' he cried at last. 'You are not playing with me? You will let me—let me hope?'

She nodded.

'Then there is nothing I cannot do!' he cried exultingly. 'You will see—you will see! I'll work, I'll slave! You shall have a home that you need not disdain, my queen! Do not be afraid, I am strong—I have all the strength of the world, I believe—here and here!'

He touched first his head and then his breast with a quivering laugh. He was beside himself—drunk with joy.

'Oh,' he cried, 'that you should stoop to me! You—you!'

He fell on his knees beside her, pouring out incoherent words. She stepped back, shuddering, and then Peter leaped to his feet again.

'I am frightening you,' he said, in an altered voice; 'don't be afraid, love. I can control myself. See, I am quite calm now. But you must have a little pity on me—I am like a thirsty man who has come at last in sight of water. Sweetheart, since you are to be my wife, why should you hold me off? You have played with me so often—let me feel sure of you for once!'

His arm was stealing round her now, his face was bent to hers; but Nathalie shivered again. Gazing at him with eyes wide with horror, almost with hatred, she stretched out both her hands and thrust him from her.

'I can't!' she cried, almost with a scream. 'Oh, my God, I can't! What was I thinking of! How could I give such a promise? Keep off—or I shall die with loathing!'

The admonition was needless; Peter had already fallen back, and stood with his arms hanging stiffly by his side, as one transfixed.

'I can't do it,' she went on moaningly. 'You mustn't be angry—I tried, indeed I tried. But now I know—I can't!'

'There is somebody else,' said Peter; his lips were so dry that the words were scarcely intelligible, but she heard them, and averted her head.

'You may as well own up,' he went on, making a strong effort to regain command of himself; 'I know it without your telling me, but I must hear the whole story. Who is the man?'

'You wouldn't know——' she began falteringly.

'I choose to know, though,' interrupted he, catching at the words.

'His name is Ralph Cheverill,' she said, almost in a whisper. 'I met him two years ago at Monte Carlo. A young Englishman—we met often. Afterwards he followed us, my cousin and I, to Switzerland.'

'Why did you not marry him?' queried Peter as she paused. She laughed bitterly.

'He said he loved me, but—well, it was not convenient to him to marry a penniless girl. His family was a great one, but he was a younger son; he was in a smart regiment, though he called himself a poor man—he had been accustomed all his life to everything that wealth can give—ease, pleasure, luxury—he didn't see fit to give up these things for me.'

'Yet you love him still?' said Peter, his lips writhing in a very strange smile.

'I love him still!' she owned defiantly. 'Heavens! yes,'

she added with gathering passion, 'I love him—I will always love him. I cannot tear him from my heart. I cannot forget him, though he has made my life a torture to me.'

'And you! What have you done with my life?' broke out Peter violently. 'I wonder I don't kill you as you stand there bragging of your love for another man. And I—I—oh, my God, I thought I was the first!'

'Kill me and welcome!' cried she, gazing up, without blanching, into his glaring eyes. 'Put me out of my misery—it will be a boon. I have no fear of death.'

'No, you only fear love—my love,' he groaned. And, turning from her, and leaning his arms against the wall, he hid his face in them.

She went towards him, trembling in spite of her brave words.

'Oh, Peter, forgive me,' she faltered, 'I did want to love you—all my life I have always craved for love. Nobody else cares a snap of their fingers for me—I knew you were good and true—'

'True!' he echoed, with a muffled but exceedingly bitter laugh.

'I—didn't want to let you go——' she continued; 'then there would have been no one. I—Peter, I give you my word I thought I could love you.'

'Oh, have done!' he muttered without looking round.

She stood still for a moment contemplating the sturdy, broad-shouldered form which, nevertheless, seemed so stricken, biting her lip the while and clasping and unclasping her hands nervously; then she gently touched his arm.

'Perhaps—in time——' she was beginning, when he shook her off and turned upon her fiercely.

'No!' he cried; and thrusting her from him he left her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THROUGH AN ATTIC WINDOW.

BAILIFF WOODS had, as he thought, finished paying the weekly wages of the men employed on Miss Manvers' estate, and was proceeding to lock up his desk, when the doorway of his office was darkened by a stalwart figure.

'Pon my word, I was near forgetting you!' he exclaimed cheerfully. 'I was just wondering to myself how I had so much money

over. There you are, Mr. Hounsell !' When quite alone with Peter, the bailiff found himself unable to dispense with the prefix to his name. 'That's all, I suppose ?'

'No,' said Peter, 'there's something else. I want to leave—I want to get out of this place at once. You can keep that—' designating the money which Mr. Woods had pushed towards him—'instead of notice ; that's the correct thing, isn't it ?'

'Lard bless my soul !' exclaimed the other, astonished. 'You do take I by surprise ! Be ye going home ?' he added, struck by a sudden thought, and his face clearing in consequence.

'No, indeed,' returned Peter bitterly. 'Nothing less likely.'

Woods moved the lamp so as to get a fuller view of the young man's face, and was shocked at its haggard misery.

'Whatever be the matter wi' you ?' he asked. 'You do look terrible rough.'

'It's nothing,' was the reply, delivered with a laugh which, as the bailiff afterwards remarked, 'cruddled' the blood in his veins. 'I've just found out what a fool I've been—that's all.'

'I did always tell ye so, didn't I ? But, steady now—steady's the word. Don't go from bad to worse, Mr. Peter. Shut the door, and sit down here for a minute. Take it cool, my boy, take it cool.'

'There's no use my sitting down, and I haven't time. I want to get away before nightfall.'

Woods sat down himself, and peered up at the underkeeper anxiously.

'Where be goin' to, then ?' he inquired, after a minute.

'Oh, I don't know—I dare say I shall go on the tramp for a bit.'

'On the tramp !' repeated Woods. 'On the tramp, Mr. Peter ! Whatever be you a-talkin' on ? I d' 'low ye are not quite yourself to-night.'

'I am perfectly sober, if you mean that. I—look here, Mr. Woods, I must be off ; I can't waste any more time. Shake hands—you've been a good friend to me !'

Woods gaped at him for a moment, and then, darting from his chair with a celerity astonishing in a man of his years and build, locked the door, pocketed the key, and returned to his former place.

'Ye don't go off like that !' he cried. 'I can't have ye rushin' off in thic mad way wi'out so much as knowin' where you be goin' or what you do want to do. I knowed your father well—I was

always his friend in a respectful kind o' way—he done me a good turn more nor once; I'll not stand by and see his son destroyin' hisself if I can help it. Now bide a bit, Mr. Peter, do—that's a good lad—I'll not keep ye five minutes. Dear, to be sure, what's all this to-do about? I thought ye was a man.'

The chance phrase was the best which the old fellow could have hit on; it struck home to Peter even in his madness. After all, he must be a man, he *was* a man.

'There's a notion just come to me,' went on the bailiff. 'I can't make head or tail of why ye must be off in such a hurry, but I did always think ye'd find it onpossible for to stay here. I knowed that from the first. Now listen—if you be really and truly set again going home—'

Peter made an impatient movement more eloquent than words.

Mr. Woods shook his head with a scandalised air, and resumed:

'Well, if ye bain't goin' home, and if ye be still determined to earn your own livin', I know of a place what I think mid suit ye.'

He fumbled among some papers in a drawer of his desk, and selected a letter.

''Tis a gentleman what do live over t'other side of the county,' he resumed, 'over towards the chase, you know. He did write to ax I for a character for Jim Bridle. Well, I can't no ways recommend Jim Bridle—not for this place. 'Tis a more responsible place, do you see, than what he did have here—it 'ud take a different quality of man, so to speak, nor Jim. Jim have been discharged from another place since he left us, so I don't know as I could speak for en any ways. But if you would think o' the situation, Mr. Peter, I'd do my best to get it for 'ee, and I think I mid succeed. I'd say you was a-leavin' of we because you was too good for us—and that's true enough, the Lard knows! 'Tis eighteen shillin' a week, an' a house. I'm half-ashamed to mention such things to ye, but if you will go your own way—'

'I hope there's a suit of clothes included,' interrupted Peter grimly. 'I ought to leave these here for my successor, by the way, oughtn't I?'

'Oh, no call to do that—no call to do that!' cried Woods, waving his hand handsomely.

'Miss Manvers will have a right to complain, though,' rejoined Peter more seriously. 'I think I will pay for these, and that will make it all square.'

'She'll be terr'ble vexed at your leavin',' admitted the bailiff. 'Well, now, see here, I'll write that there letter to-night, and ye

mid get a answer on Monday. Mr. Ullington—that's the gentleman's name, seemed in a awful hurry—so he'd probably want ye early in the week. I wouldn't go traipsin' off to-night if I was you, Mr. Peter. Bide quietly at Meadway's, and make sure o' this chance. It be a chance,' he added, deprecatingly; 'in the walk of life you've chose for yourself now, Mr. Peter, it certainly be a chance.'

Peter looked at him oddly, and after a moment's silence extended his hand.

'You are quite right, Mr. Woods,' he said, 'and I am grateful—exceedingly grateful. If I get this place I will do my best to do you credit.'

'I'm sure of that,' rejoined the other, rising and going towards the door, which he proceeded to unlock. 'Ye'll want a few sticks of furniture for your cottage,' he resumed. 'I was thinking maybe the loan of a few pounds 'ud come in handy just to start wi'. You could pay me back at your convenience. Your father done the same for me when I was a young chap, and got into a bit o' trouble. I wouldn't like it to be generally known, but I don't mind tellin' you, Mr. Peter.'

'No, no,' cried Peter, grasping his hand, 'you are very good; but I don't need the money. I have a few pounds of my own that my mother put in the savings bank for me when I was a small boy. I forgot all about it, but I can draw it out now. Good-night, and thank you. I'll take your advice and go back to Meadway's house now.'

He walked homewards through the plantation, half groping at times, for the moon shone but fitfully, and the mists which clung about the almost leafless trees produced as deep a gloom as though the boughs were clothed; his feet fell heavily on sodden leaves and slimy moss, his heart felt like lead within him. The fierce passion of a little while ago had deserted him, giving place to an apathy which seemed to envelop him body and soul. Two of Mr. Wood's phrases lingered in his memory, piercing through this dull calm.

'I thought you was a man.' . . . 'The walk of life you've chose for yourself now.'

He must bear his fate like a man; he must play the best part he could in the new sphere which he had made his own. Though he had once indignantly repudiated Miss Manvers' assertion that he was play-acting, he knew now that there was a certain foundation for the accusation. He had voluntarily lowered himself, but only as a means to an end; that end obtained he had fully intended

to rise again, to resume, if not to soar above, his former station of life. But now power and will alike seemed lacking; he was irrevocably unclassified.

Prue stole one glance at him as he entered, and quickly averted her eyes. Though Peter, contrary to his wont, talked and laughed loudly during the meal, she was not deceived. When, refusing Mr. Meadway's hospitable invitation to smoke his pipe like a sensible body by the fire, he went out of doors for the purpose, Prue presently followed him.

He had been leaning over the garden-gate, gazing out into the dark trees dimly visible in the greyness of the night, but turned at sound of the opening of the house door. The flagged path was momentarily irradiated as she stood hesitating, her little figure outlined by the glow within; then closing the door she came noiselessly to his side.

She asked him no question, but her quiet, sympathetic presence was a relief to him. He was still young enough to feel that it would ease his heart to speak of the trouble which overwhelmed it; here was one who knew and could understand.

'Come a little way with me, Prue,' he said; 'come out under the trees.'

She obeyed in silence; her foot slipped on the slimy path, and he caught her by the arm to steady her.

They paused when quite out of sight of the house.

'It's all over, Prue,' he said. 'She won't have me. There's somebody else.'

'Oh!' cried Prue; and she wrenched away her arm the better to clasp her hands. Then, after a pause: 'I guessed as much—I knew she was tricking you!'

Peter began an irritable protest: How was it possible for anyone else to have made such a discovery when he himself had been so completely deceived? But suddenly he broke off:

'She said something this morning which made you suspect?' he exclaimed breathlessly, adding reproachfully: 'You should have told me; you shouldn't have stood by and let me make a fool of myself.'

'I did tell 'ee everything—every word she said,' retorted Prue quickly. 'It was the way she looked at the flowers—the beautiful flowers what cost ye such a deal. She did seem in such delight at first, and then—disappointed-like when I told her they came from you.'

There was a pause; neither she nor Peter venturing to put

into words the thought which was in the minds of both. Nathalie had expected a gift from another man. It was on that account, no doubt, added Peter to himself, that she had fixed her birthday as the limit of his probation.

He broke the long oppressive silence with a bitter laugh.

'A nice mess I have made of my life, haven't I? What shall I do with it now, I wonder?'

'Go home'! cried Prue, suddenly, in an odd little dry voice; 'go back—it was only a mistake after all.'

'No,' he returned sullenly, 'no; I am Keeper Hounsell now, and Keeper Hounsell I must remain—a working man who must slave all his days to earn his bread.'

Prue was silent. He could dimly make out her little grey shape beside him, but it was too dark for him to see her face.

'Of course I am going away,' he went on. 'You understand, I couldn't go on living here where everything reminds me of her. There's not a tree—not a stone about this place, but is in some way associated with her, and with all I thought and dreamed about her; I should go mad if I stayed here.'

He paused, but the girl did not speak.

'You should give me better advice than that,' he continued after a minute, in a tone of bitter mockery. 'Mr. Woods does. He knows of a place that he thinks will suit me; the wages are higher than what I get here, and there is a house. Think of that! A house for me to live in all by myself—I shall have a home of my own, my very own. A home—isn't that a prospect? Shall I accept this tempting offer or shall I enlist? I am almost inclined to enlist.'

'Go for a soldier!' exclaimed Prue.

'Yes. A soldier has many chances—grand, glorious chances. A bullet through the heart—and there would be an end of Peter Hounsell! A very good thing for everyone, and particularly Peter himself.'

He heard a stifled exclamation beside him, and the wet leaves of the bush near which they had been standing suddenly flapped against him, showering cold spray; the patter of flying feet sounded on the pathway, there was a flash of light as the cottage door opened and closed. Prue was gone!

Peter looked after her with an impatient sigh; after all, there was not much comfort in telling Prue; there was no comfort in anything. The mere voicing of his wrongs had roused afresh a storm of wrath and disappointed passion, and Prue's unlucky

comment almost goaded him to fury. That Nathalie should have kept him hanging on, palpitating between hope and fear, for so many months, just on the chance that this aristocratic lover of hers might deign to remember her existence, revealed a depth of duplicity that was scarcely conceivable? What would have happened if the fine gentleman had indeed vouchsafed a token? Why he, Peter, would have been instantly sent to the right-about; his impotent ardours, his agonising longing shaken off from her memory as she would shake the dust from her garments.

He set his teeth and ground his heel deep in the sodden ground. Maddening as would have been the humiliation, crushing the disappointment, it would have been better, he told himself, than the fate which had actually befallen him. Uplifted for five delirious minutes to the pinnacle of bliss, only to be dashed down to the lowest deep of despair and infamy. Yes, infamy! Till he died he would remember how she had shuddered away from his embrace—how she had well-nigh swooned with loathing. Surely she had sinned against him the unforgiveable sin; offered him the deepest indignity which woman can inflict on man.

Summoned indoors at length by the querulous voice of Mrs. Meadway, who was anxious to lock up for the night, Peter mounted the ladder and threw himself heavily on his bed, but only to live through again and again that crucial hour of his life. After tossing for hours in restless misery, he got up and went to the window which always stood open, seeking, half unconsciously, some relief to his physical wretchedness by letting the chill air play upon his burning head.

Presently, through the thin partition, he heard Prue stirring in her little chamber, and the casement on her side was thrown open. He did not move, and after a moment or two he caught the sound of muffled sobs.

The window was just large enough to admit of his head being passed through, and he thrust it out now, whispering quickly and irritably:

‘Is that you, Prue? What are you crying for?’

‘Oh, Mr. Hounsell,’ murmured Prue, ‘can’t you sleep either? Oh, I—I—’

She broke off, sobs choking her.

‘Hush, you foolish little girl,’ said Peter, impatiently. ‘What have you to cry for?’

In his passionate despair her childish sorrow jarred upon him.

She sobbed on for a moment, and then her casement creaked

backwards a little more, and he could dimly see the outline of her head and face, as she too leaned out.

'You said—you said—you wanted to get killed.'

He actually laughed; so this was the trouble!

'Well, wouldn't it be a good thing?' he inquired, not unkindly.

'Oh, don't, don't! Oh, Mr. Hounsell, you'll break my heart!'

'There, go back to bed; you'll catch your death of cold. Poor little thing, I shouldn't have frightened you!'

'But you won't really go for a soldier, Mr. Hounsell?'

He could only see the merest silhouette of her face, but her voice was very urgent.

'No,' he said after a pause, 'if it's any comfort to you, I'll promise not to be a soldier. I'll go on being a keeper, Prue, and I'll live in my beautiful new house. Will that satisfy you?'

'Oh, thank you!' came the answer, with a fervour which made him smile.

'Now, good-night, my dear. Go away from that window.'

The window was closed, and all was silent again.

Peter sat musing for a little longer, feeling ashamed of his recent half-resolve as he thought of how it had affected Prue. The child had a true heart, he said to himself; she was probably the only being in the world who cared a jot whether he lived or died. Well, now he must go away and leave her; he must cut even this little tie as he had severed the rest. He must go out into the world alone.

(To be continued.)

A Distinguished Librarian.¹

IT is a peculiarity of the Anglo-Saxon, perhaps of the human, race that it is more prone to lament over what might have been than to rejoice over what is or has been. The early death, a year ago, of Arthur Strong, Librarian to the House of Lords and at Chatsworth, also lecturer in Arabic and in Assyriology at University College, London, gave ample provocation to this tendency. For the wisdom, the union of wide knowledge with keen insight, in this man just forty, gave the same promise of great achievement as when, in his early youth, it had been authoritatively written of him, 'He is one of those from whom the rising generation has most to expect.' Inevitably the strain of regret was raised that this life should have closed before it had found expression in work worthy of his powers. His friends, expressing the hopes they had conceived from his rare ability, and describing the various themes they had wished him to treat in his fulness of knowledge, forgot to dwell upon what he had given, or to consider that, even though production, in any adequate form, still lingered, there was—as Lord Balcarras says excellently in a Memoir—achievement in his very personality,² and a gift to his generation in the stimulus of his ever ardent, ever open mind.

In one respect lament had in this case a special ground. Arthur Strong, with his early bent to Oriental studies, his faculty of learning, one after another, those difficult languages with a mastery which has been described as 'genius,' and coupling with this genius of the scholar the keen interest in present affairs of the politician, was, one would suppose, just such a man as England has need of in her Empire over Eastern races. But England, who governs India, makes little provision for Oriental studies, leaving that task to the disinterested zeal of France and Germany; a young

¹ *Critical Studies and Fragments.* By the late S. Arthur Strong, M.A., &c. With a Memoir by Lord Balcarras. London, 1905.

² Memoir, p. 25.

Englishman, whatever his aptitude, can scarcely hope to make a career for himself, or even win a livelihood, by devotion in that field. Strong accordingly, after vain waiting upon the few narrow openings afforded, was compelled to turn elsewhere for sustenance, and took up the work of librarian, first to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, and shortly afterwards to the House of Lords, filling the latter post at a singularly early age.

From the point of view of Orientalism, the diversion of a mind of this calibre from studies to which he had given his longest effort is, no doubt, pure loss; and no doubt also, but for this diversion, there would now remain more special work to carry Arthur Strong's name down to posterity. Yet since he was much more than Orientalist, and was distinguished as well by the universality of his genius as by its brilliancy in any single branch of learning, a diversion which gave scope to many-sidedness even at the expense of concentration is not wholly to be regretted. For in this width, in the rare union of fresh interest with unfailing knowledge, lay one of the chief charms of the man and his rare distinction.

Strong's variety of interest and knowledge, rare in any age, was unique in this present one, where breadth of culture is narrowed down by the exigencies of competitive examinations and the struggle for life. In view of the chances of his own life, actually narrow in outward circumstance, his learning seemed to have an element of the miraculous. As a fact, his mind was of an alertness that, from childhood, embraced instinctively every chance of acquiring knowledge, and embraced it with the passion which fixes knowledge indelibly upon the memory. And there are no circumstances so narrow as to exclude opportunity thus eagerly met.

In his very alertness, in the peculiar vividness of his interests, in his sensitive, swift response to all life's stimulus, in the sensibility so clearly traced in his finely cut brow and penetrating eye, Arthur Strong belonged neither to his generation nor to that of the immediate future. This sensitiveness is a thing gained, not in maturity but in childhood, when a delicate organism is allowed to foster precocious intellectual activity, meditating prematurely upon the universe, with the imaginative emotional colouring peculiar to young thought. In such case knowledge acquired in later life is but the blooming of the 'visionary flowers' of youth, and keeps their fragrant beauty; memory becomes the realisation of dream. The rising generation, brought up on careful principles of physical development, sheltered whether at school or at home from undue

exercise of their mental faculties, will, it may be hoped, enjoy healthy, happy lives, and when at length they reach man's privilege of 'thinking,' will look soundly, if prosaically, upon the world. But for them thought cannot be alive with reminiscent feeling.

With Arthur Strong the roots of his manifold interests were planted singularly young, and his intellectual life was accordingly the essence of his being. To take the sole instance of art criticism, the present writer remembers his narrating, with a characteristic ironic cut at the puerilities of art critics, how he himself began the career at the age of ten, and, wandering alone through the National Gallery, confided his 'discoveries' to a friendly policeman. Those privileged to visit galleries with him know how he preserved in later years the child's fresh delight which, even more than his exhaustless knowledge, made the charm of his companionship. His temper, indeed, in every province of knowledge, was of the explorer, akin to that which set Raleigh in the Tower on writing a history of the world, rather than of a generation burdened by a sense of accumulated facts and documentary evidence. Such was Strong's easy intellectual mastery and power of memory that the vast array of 'facts' at his command lent precision and clearness to his view of the world, but never dulled the novelty and wonder.

Nature, or the bent taken in childhood and becoming second nature in the man, had thus provided Strong with a first-rateness of thought, an habitual seat in high places, which made him intolerant, contemptuous even—it is, in this would-be-kindly age, the reverse of the medal—of the props and levers by which the second-rate strive to lift their heads (or raise the heads of others) into the serener air. All the mutual aid societies of the day, the University Extension and other schemes for spreading knowledge, won from him scant sympathy. In himself the higher strands were interwoven with his being rather than caught at or made the object of deliberate search, and he heartily despised the parade of effort with which England pursues the culture which was his, it would seem, by magic birthright. He saw with peculiar concern the new University of London busy itself with the task of educating the nation, holding not this, but the nurture of that higher scholarship which can never be the portion of the multitude, to be the chief function of a university. He desired that England should hoard, and add to, what little gold of learning she possesses, rather than distribute it in attenuated substance among the masses.

Here, again, he not only was not of this generation, but ran directly counter to its tendencies. Clothing, moreover, keen feeling in vivid utterance, he not infrequently, as he expressed it, 'fluttered the dovescots,' or even, when offence was given to birds of less mild habits, awakened enmity. For while his caustic epigrams lent a pungent savour to friendly intercourse, he did not invariably observe La Bruyère's golden counsel, to be witty only with *les gens d'esprit*, and dull gossip would bring round strange echoes of his irony.

But it is with his acquirements—his pleasures, not his prejudices, if such they were—that we are here concerned.

Setting Orientalism aside—and had he continued to make this his central study, it would only have been as centre to a most comprehensive range—it is difficult to say in what branch of knowledge Strong was most brilliant. His acquaintances decide for history, politics, literature, or art, according as their own sympathies kindled his fire on the one or the other theme. But whatever topic he treated, and whether in conversation or in the occasional articles, prefaces, or reviews which are all we have from his pen, the striking feature was his combined knowledge of detail and his breadth of view. There was present always historic feeling. He saw the subject in its temporal and local setting, with a glance, too, always upon the present. His historic sense was not of the kind which lives so in the past as to forget the actual, but, on the contrary, events had their value in his eyes for their bearing upon affairs of the day, and as stretching on into the future. Hence he was heart-whole politician, with a zest which many who realised him as 'scholar' found hard to credit. For if within scholarship there is nowadays rigid specialisation, yet more sharply marked is the dividing line between learning and practical life.

Nevertheless, the career which provided Strong with a practical opening, if it could not fully satisfy the needs of his activity nor the ambitions of his friends, afforded, more perhaps than any other, scope and opportunity for his varied powers. As librarian to the House of Lords, his political insight had, so we learn from Lord Balcarras' Memoir, at least informal play; at Chatsworth there was scarcely a branch of even his wide knowledge but was called into requisition in the post he held.

The title 'Librarian at Chatsworth' is misleading. The library there is a great library, on a par with that at Althorpe, celebrated by Dibdin, and now turned to public uses as the Rylands

Library in Manchester. It contains bibliophilic treasures in as many branches as those published by Lord Crawford in the detailed and highly classified 'Lindesiana' catalogues. But the post of librarian involves far more than the care of many thousand books and manuscripts. The charge comprises also, not only the collections of drawings and other art treasures which find their local habitat within the 'library,' but also the pictures, sculptures, gems, and other objects which accumulate in a great family by the natural course of ages and through the collecting zeal of successive owners, and which, so far from being contained in the circumference of the library, are scattered in many houses and divided between London and the country. Add to this the care of family archives, and it will be seen that the post resembles that of director of a museum rather than of a librarian in the customary restricted sense. And since the 'director' has in this case no trained subordinates to whom he may relegate the work of the several departments, he requires a range of knowledge and a universality of interest rare in the extreme, and still more rarely combined, as it was in the case of Arthur Strong, with first-rateness and independence of judgment in every branch.

The work, if it made great demands, was fraught also, to such a mind as Strong's, with the keenest delight. He threw himself with characteristic zest into investigation of the treasures thus opened to his study. Readers of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE may recall the letters of Dickens, Thackeray, and Leigh Hunt, lighter gleanings from the Devonshire archives, which he published in its pages. Some fruits of his sure eye and untrammelled judgment, exercised upon the works of art, are also familiar to the public; the recognition, for instance, of original Greek sixth-century work in the wonderful bronze head at Chatsworth, so long neglected as a debased Roman copy; and again the restoration of mutilated and dissevered strips of tapestry at Hardwick into the unique and priceless panels recently shown at the South Kensington Museum. These were accompanied by a number of minor rehabilitations and discoveries. Selections from the drawings at Chatsworth, and of the pictures there and at Devonshire House and Hardwick, were published under his editorship, and, while it may be left to connoisseurs to weigh the merit of his attributions, the general reader gains from his prefaces some of those descriptive phrases which, even to the unartistic, reveal the picture. Such is his characterisation of Rembrandt's 'Rabbi' at Chatsworth: 'Sensuous but alert at the same time, like a bird of prey.'

These publications of art treasures under his care led to similar work in other English houses. He published the Pembroke drawings, and wrote a preface to Lady Wantage's pictures. But together with his activity as curator of art treasures went the less conspicuous, but no less congenial, work of the librarian proper.

Strong's interest in the study of art, as of all else, was coloured always, and vivified, by his feeling for the historical and social setting, and for the person of the artist. His passion for Michael Angelo and Leonardo had kept the strain of his boyish hero-worship; his love for Sir Joshua partook of his tenderness for all flowers of English soil. The very varied and heterogeneous nature of the collections under his charge interested him as reflecting the successive tastes of owners, or merely perhaps the manners and customs of the days of the Grand Tour. Not for worlds would he persuade the private owner of however inaccessible a collection to part with one of his treasures to adorn the well-ordered shelves of a museum, and this not from mere sentiment, but with the reasoned conviction that such transference destroys records of more value than the gain in publicity. He saw the history of England written in the annals of great houses, as well in their collections as in their archives.

Similarly, his love and knowledge of books was alive with circumstance, vibrant with the memory of the part the work had played in the world, and of the chances which had befallen the actual copy in his hands. One can imagine a *Literary Decameron* from his pen which, distinguished from Dibdin's by unimpeachable accuracy and precision of statement first, and secondly by the larger interest of the circumstance adduced, should, equally with that popular work, invest 'old books' with a charm penetrating beyond the bibliophile to the cultivated public. He pleased himself once with the dream of a library in which arrangement should follow the actual life of the books, the epoch-making work flanked, for example, by its precursors on the one hand, its offspring and imitators on the other. For he brought to librarianship the scientific temper which, embracing all at once as detail and in organic growth, would have made of him, had youthful tastes in that direction taken the upper hand, a great entomologist.

In the private library of an historic house, organic interest is peculiarly strong, applying to the collection as a whole as well as to the individual books. Such a library is not formed, as is a public library, to supply definite needs and be complete within

its prescribed sphere. It has grown with the house, a chance accretion of books in part, echoing outside events; while, even when deliberately 'collected,' the volumes reflect the opportunities, tastes, and habits of successive generations and owners. At Chatsworth this organic interest is the greater for being not centred in any dominating personality, but evenly distributed throughout the centuries. There is no 'Iron Duke' in the House of Cavendish. But there has been a succession of men of affairs, never controlling the situation, but always 'in the swim,' and they, in their minor parts, call up the whole play more faithfully, perhaps, than the prominent actors. The long array of political tracts, from the days of Elizabeth onward, bears witness to this continuous public interest. Characteristic among these men, honourably participating in events rather than leading them, is the first earl, who, created by James I., shared in the colonising zeal of that time, and who, though he did not rival the more illustrious Thomas Cavendish in personal adventure, received from the King a grant of land in the Bermudas. To him the library owes a rare set of pamphlets on Virginia and the Bermudas, nucleus of the fine collection of travels.

The wealth of the library in Italian and French books, again, dates back to the second and third earls, father and son, who both successively travelled through the Continent with their family tutor, the philosopher Hobbes. Neither would seem to have developed any turn for philosophy, but the younger, especially, cultivated a nice taste in literature, and, in addition to the contemporary foreign books he brought home from abroad, enriched the library with rare classics. That happy patronage of Hobbes brought also special treasure into the library at Chatsworth and the muniment-room at Hardwick, and has linked a more world-wide fame with the young earl's distinction for good looks and a cultivated understanding.

The philosopher died in contented dependence upon his former pupil, though awakening in his old age at Hardwick more curiosity, it would seem, than respect. He was remembered there as a man of bold and dangerous opinions, but, by retribution of Providence, a sad coward in his person, afraid of death, and clinging to the skirts of his patron rather than be left to die in solitude at Chatsworth. A quaint treatise from his pen, dealing mathematically with the movements of a horse, which Strong found and published in the *Welbeck Papers*, recalls his earlier intercourse, in more adventurous days, with the Duke of Newcastle.

Hobbes, however, was not 'of the family,' and in spite of his close connection, his 'remains' may be looked upon as accidental treasure-trove, caught in by chance from the larger cycle of philosophic thought. A notorious figure of the eighteenth century, the 'building Earl' of Burlington, whom Pope celebrated in his *Man of Taste*, was attached by the more effective bond of marriage, and brought in spoils more naturally fitted to adorn a library. His memory lives at Chatsworth in the collection of works on architecture and in the drawings by Inigo Jones—the latter of unsuspected interest and beauty, designs for the stately pageants of his day. Strong, his friends will remember, had entered with zest upon identification of the characters depicted, and of the Ben Jonson and other masques they illustrate. The Boyle connection brought also to the Cavendishes, together with much landed property, such unique treasures as the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, and that illuminated prayer-book given by Henry VII. to his daughter Margaret of Scotland, the same which Evelyn noted among the King's books at Whitehall. This increase came to a collection already rich on the side of the fine arts, owning—by purchase of the second duke—the *Liber Veritatis* of Claude, and the Italian drawings and prints.

A trait more strongly marked in the Cavendishes than any love of art or literature was, however, a scientific and mathematical bent, of which the family provided many instances, from the young soldier and mathematician Charles Cavendish, killed at Gainsborough, to the late 'scholar duke,' who was senior wrangler at Cambridge as well as second classic and Smith's prizeman—a union rare even in men of less exalted rank. The bent reached its highest point in a junior branch, and in the person of Henry Cavendish, the physicist, who, in his retreat at Clapham, 'weighed the earth' and 'analysed the air.' By indirect inheritance and the natural gravitation of wealth to wealth, the whole of his library came in the early nineteenth century to Chatsworth, to swell a collection which, in the hands of the sixth duke, had already assumed enormous proportions. The peculiar interest of this addition is, of course, scientific. Had it been exclusively so, it would, one may fear, have met with scant welcome from the duke, more disposed to pity his relative for renouncing 'the world' than to admire him for weighing it. But, as a fact, the rare classics, travels, and works of antiquarian, literary, and artistic interest, now scattered throughout the shelves at Chatsworth, but bearing the modest stamp of 'Henry Cavendish,' reveal the scientist as a man of rich and varied

culture who, if he shunned contemporary society, held wide intercourse with the spirits of the past.

It is the sixth duke who, from his affection for the place, the vast reconstructions and improvements he effected there, and the extent to which the collections grew in his hands, is the peculiar figure-head of Chatsworth as we know it now. He was the collector *par excellence* of the family.

The taste for collecting, so rife in the days of the Stuarts, no doubt influenced even Hobbes's pupil, the third earl, in his purchases of the classics. It continued with subsequent owners, steadily but within modest bounds, and with the growing 'collector's instinct' for fine bindings and large-paper copies. The chances of the sale-room brought volumes from De Thou's and many another famous library to Chatsworth.

The taste for a sumptuous volume was shared by the beautiful duchess, Georgiana, sister to the Lord Spencer who, with Dibdin's aid, so notably enriched the library at Althorpe. She, it is told, permitted her brother to carry away from Chatsworth some first editions, but had from him in return the Aldine Petrarch finely illuminated by Clovio Giulio. The ardent political lady who in London gaily risked her reputation in the service of the Whig party, had a genuine taste besides for the contents of books, and at Chatsworth was to be seen, her son narrates, frequently perched on the library steps. However generous to her brother, she strove to keep within due bounds the borrowing propensities of her guests, exciting mirth at least in her endeavours.

Of her are many memories at Chatsworth—from Sir Joshua's portraits to her own literary efforts in print or manuscript, or to the scandalous poetic squibs stirred by her partisanship of Fox. Strong's warm admiration for this duchess, whose native wit freed her from the limitations of her class while her assured grace rested upon its privileges, may be seen in his choice of her letters for the *Anglo-Saxon Review*, and in a brief appreciation of her portrait. The fifth duke, phlegmatic husband though he was thought to so vivacious a creature, was a man also of cultivated understanding and—so at least Wraxall asserts—the great authority at Brooks's when, in the intervals of gambling, there arose disputes as to Greek or Roman authorship. It is more to the purpose that he bought books for the library, notably from the Lamoignon sale.

But with the sixth duke, his successor, collecting took on wholesale proportions, and passed from the stage of hobby into

that of mania. Not content with purchasing at sales of famous libraries, he brought to Chatsworth whole collections, acquiring thus the Dampier classical library and the famous 'Kemble plays.' The growth was so great as to demand complete rehousing of the books, and, among the other changes by which the sixth duke enhanced the comfort, while ruining the proportions, of his Palladian house, he converted the former great gallery into the present library. Chatsworth, thus 'improved,' was made the special home for all new acquisitions, while even Devonshire House was denuded for its benefit—among much else, of the superb Van Dycks, now in the Chatsworth dining-room.

Care in the custodianship of the books, however, scarcely kept pace with zeal in their acquisition. Neither the village school-master's son who performed the duties of librarian at Chatsworth, nor Payne Collier, who acted as the duke's 'literary adviser,' seems to have troubled himself with the question of 'cataloguing.' It is singular that the latter did not catalogue at least the Kemble plays, so fully within his province as Shakespearean critic. But Payne Collier, though he showed his sense of favours received by presenting the duke with his own forged folio, actually overlooked in the library one of the genuine Shakespeare folios, which remained for Strong's predecessor, Sir James Lacaita, to chance upon while searching for a missing volume.

Not until the time of the late duke and the librarianship of Sir James Lacaita was any printed catalogue attempted, and the one then issued, though it may serve the purpose indifferently well as general reference catalogue, is at once too comprehensive and too incomplete to satisfy the bibliophile, or indeed to give much idea of the wealth of the library. It was obviously impossible to catalogue in a short space of time a library on the scale now reached at Chatsworth, with any adequate care in collating rare works or supplying bibliophilic details. And, as a fact, this catalogue, which includes current works of slight and passing interest, leaves untouched such large provinces as the Kemble plays—at the time of its compilation in London—and many hundred volumes of political tracts. Since it was made the library, moreover, has still further grown, both by purchase and by influx to Chatsworth from other houses.

The task of compiling an adequate catalogue remained for Strong; and it remains still unfulfilled. Strong's years of office were too few, and the hours at his disposal for the task too much broken, for great visible progress to be made. But with that end

in view he began a closer survey of the library, which proved fruitful in 'discovery.' From out uncatalogued and miscellaneous volumes of 'tracts' or 'poems,' relegated to corridors, he gathered in to the library proper many a first edition and historical 'document.' The books of Henry Cavendish especially afforded a rich harvest to this exacter study. The evident, well-bound treasures among them had, as observed, taken at once their several places in the Chatsworth shelves—somewhat to Strong's regret, for, with keen appreciation of the great scientist, he would have liked his books to be kept together. But there remained a vast number of more work-a-day volumes, mainly scientific in character, and largely composed of treatises and pamphlets bound together for convenience sake. From among these Strong picked out, for example, a number of rare original tracts which, brought together upon one set of shelves, provide a brief and eloquent epitome of the history of the mathematical sciences. There the discoveries of Kepler and of Galileo may be read again in their momentous freshness, and ancient rivalries in squaring the circle may be retraced. There are the mathematical trifles which solaced Pascal in hours of physical pain, and there Hobbes and Wallis exchange their rude amenities.

Among these scientific books the 'find' may be distinguished from the 'purchase' by the stamp of 'Henry Cavendish.' In other instances such distinction cannot be made with absolute certainty. We surmise, for example, that Strong bought the first editions of Gray's *Elegy* and of his *Odes*, but wonder whether Mason's *Elfrida*, which stands beside them, did not come earlier to Chatsworth. For Mason was tutor to that Lord John Cavendish whom Walpole so unkindly dubbed the 'Learned Canary.'

At least we can distinguish the books which, by the one method or the other, Strong added to the library. The fate which arrested his work performed one act of piety to his memory, akin to that he was himself performing for Henry Cavendish. It left together these fruits of his activity which, at a more advanced stage of cataloguing, would have been dispersed and buried in the general record. Now his acquisitions have their own provisional catalogues of English, foreign, Greek, and Latin, mathematical and scientific books, while, pending rearrangement, the actual volumes are in great measure kept together.

As appears from these catalogues, Strong's activity as purchaser was very great, his quick feeling for historic continuity incessantly tempting him to fill up gaps or prolong lines already

entered upon. His friends note with particular interest how frequently the lead given by the library afforded an opening to his individual tastes. He added to the wealth of Elizabethan literature at Chatsworth a singularly beautiful copy of the *Masque of Flowers*, as also *More Knaves Yet* and *Humour's Looking-glass*, by Rowlands, with other rarities; and we recall the way he knew his Shakespeare 'by heart.' Completing the first edition of *Don Quixote*, and adding other Spanish books to a collection famous for its unique first edition of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, Strong gratified an interest of recent growth in Spanish literature. His purchase of old books on music, early sets of madrigals, and a scarce work by Josquin des Prés, points to a connoisseurship of which only his intimates were aware, developed in early youth. The Johnsoniana and first editions of Swift remind us again of his particular loves. Individual books, such as the Pembroke and Ruddier poems dedicated to Christian, Countess of Devonshire, indicate his constant memory for the personal link. Again it is significant that the few copies he purchased of Greek and Latin classics can almost all boast earlier ownership by Porson, Casaubon, Bentley, or some other 'humanist.'¹

In the occasional purchases of early printed books and fine bindings, Strong's sense of a librarian's duty perhaps prevailed rather than personal inclination. The history of printing was, we believe, a subject for which he had comparatively little zest. Although his quick eye and his early training upon Oriental manuscripts facilitated acquaintance with printers' types, his predominant interest was always in the contents of the books. It is eminently characteristic that the large majority of his purchases are of the kind we call 'documents'—tracts or pamphlets, sermons or decrees, in which we follow at first hand the events of history. Such are, *e.g.*, a number of pamphlets against Laud, and the *Reports and Trials* concerning witches.

In brief, these books, upon which we may not linger, recall point for point the mind which gathered them, in its well-marshalled variety, its harmonious vividness, its never-flagging 'life.'

Truly, of life's feast this man, so early leaving it, had tasted more fully than many an octogenarian. But 'life'—it is the first of his own epigrammatic utterances which caught the present writer's ear—'is not a feast, but a restaurant.' For the varied fare he tasted he also paid. His width of knowledge, even within

¹ See the Appendix to *Critical Studies*, &c.

the sphere of Oriental studies, would seem to have incurred a certain suspicion from the faculty, which had its share in hindering early success. The few qualified to judge knew there was 'mastery' of Arabic as well as of Sanscrit, and that Strong was an authority in Assyriology although he had also mastered Persian. But to narrower minds, engaged in the study of some one of these languages, and impressed with its difficulty, knowledge of a second and a third seemed presumptive evidence of non-profundity in the first. Generally, we believe, in this age of specialists, his many-sidedness roused suspicion. The 'much more' that he knew was discounted against the 'much' in any one subject, as though knowledge were to be reckoned, not by its actual weight, but by the space it fills up in a mind—irrespective besides of the capacity of the containing vessel. There is little recognition to-day for the complex type we can admire retrospectively in Raleigh, Sidney, or Spenser.

Neither was lack of initial success or of wide recognition the sole payment Strong may be said to have made for the variety of his mind's fare. Reaching, as he singularly did, the heart of a subject with swift intuitive insight, he was not lured on, as duller men are lured in their blinder gropings, by half glimpses and semi-intuitions, to dwell upon a matter, beating it out exhaustively, and recording the labour in a life-work. Strong turned rapidly and light-heartedly to new fields, without pausing to record, save in brilliant talk and passing epigram, the fresh view he had seized in any one, or to fix and enlarge it in a new presentment. True, though passed by, the several views were never obliterated from his retentive memory, and had he added to the many-sided receptivity of a Goethe also Goethe's robust physique—as also, indeed, the stronger creative impulse which hangs, perhaps, upon physique—his rich stores of knowledge and fresh views might all have been one day blended, and have found expression in a great work of history and literature. But as time was short and strength frail, there remains for his friends the theme of regret—upon which, despite set purpose, the uncontrollable human tendency has brought us also here—that so much knowledge and such varied insight would seem to be finally lost. Strong himself, it is curious to note, and is in a manner characteristic, was heard during his last summer to express a half-whimsical regret, not that he had written no book upon any of the subjects which had engaged his thoughts, but that he had 'never found men to write his books,' to utilise his ideas and give written form and elaborate development to the theme he would inspire.

Yet, more, doubtless, than he realised, he did inspire other men, not only with definite knowledge and ideas, but with some breath, too, of his ardour, and with something of his untrammelled vision. His own career, meanwhile, afforded him—temptation, if one will, aside from concentrated effort in a single field, but also, we repeat, opportunity and great delight.

M. E. LOWNDES.

Selina's Wedding Garment.

THE night had been wild in Coltsy. The angry seas at the top of the tide had battered and sucked round the uneven sandhills, scouring and undermining, bringing down tons of sand from one hill and flinging it to the crest of another; but as the morning sun illuminated the bleak east coast the wind lulled, and inland gaunt, twisted trees stilled once more their waving branches, and the sea settled down to the ill-tempered roar of a spent-out storm.

Away on the horizon the masts of a wrecked steamer stood out like ruled lines against a streak of cold green sky.

A man and a woman sat close together under the peak of a sandhill. The woman's head was resting on the man's shoulder, and her face was half hidden by a beard which, save that it was slightly warmer in tone, was hardly to be distinguished from the golden sand round about. Lowering sleet clouds hung threateningly above, and seen against them the jagged sandhills stood out in unnatural sharpness.

A passer-by—had there been one—would have thought that these lonely people had been cast up by the angry sea, smashing on the beach within a hundred yards of their feet, or that they were watching for the body of some dear friend, drifting in from the ill-fated steamer which had foundered in the night.

Nothing of the sort: they had not been shipwrecked, neither did they as much as know the name of the vessel lying on the sand-bank, flying a flag of distress, and so they could not have any interest in those who had perished on her. Occasionally the man did take his gaze from the girl's face and give a quick, searching glance in the direction of the wreck, but he hastily brought it back again, knowing that many hours, perhaps tides, would elapse before anything of value could come ashore from her.

No; this lonely pair—for on all the coast-line not another human being could be seen—had no eyes for the weirdness of that storm-spent daybreak, and, apparently, little feeling for the chilly

easterly gale blowing in their faces, save that occasionally the girl snuggled closer under the lee of the man's shoulder. They were but making love, and very ardently they were doing it. The man's right arm circled the girl's waist, and with the other hand he clasped her hand. They appeared perfectly unconscious of the cold and the gloom about them so abstracted were they by each other's charms, and yet on the face of each was that shadow of unhappiness frequently to be seen in those who are very deeply in love.

The man at last allowed his pent-up feelings to burst forth. 'Yar mother's head, Selina, be stuck as full o' notions as a hedgehog's skin be full o' prickles. This here notion o' hers that we ain't ter wed till she ha' saved enow ter buy yer a white satin dress ter go ter church in ha' fairly hulled me in a buffle. Why, 't will take a sight o' money ter buy it, and we shall ha' ter wait till tew munes shine on th' sides of Easton church tower.'

'Well, there 'tis, Bob,' replied the girl, with a show of resignation she was very far from feeling. 'Yer know what my mother be when she ha' put her mind ter a thing. She say she wor married in white satin herself, and in white satin I ha' got ter be wed. I be only eighteen come Michaelmas, and I ain't out of her jurisdiction till I tarn twenty-one, me having no father and all. She say, when I taxed her about it, that I wor ter stop praten' on, cos that made her rheumatics fly all over her back like kites in a breeze.'

'Ah, she ha' got th' rheumatics all over her 'cept in her tongue; never knew 'em lay there,' said Bob Jermy resentfully. He added after a pause: 'Let's dew what I ha' said afore, times out o' number—let's dew a bunk and get married on th' sly.'

'That 'ud be a pity, Bob, cos mother, she say if I disobey her wishes she'll leave th' cottage and them tew bits o' mashes ter a horspital or charity. They belong ter her, they worn't father's, and she be likely ter carry out her words, truthful enow.'

'Then why won't she let me help ter pay for this here satin garment and ease th' time off a bit?'

'I did mention as how yer wor willing, but she flared up something awful, like one o' them paraffin lamps when yer sets it down with a jerk,' replied the girl. 'She say 't ain't likely as she'll allow her daughter's lover ter pay for her daughter's wedden' dress. What would th' neighbours say, she say, when that got ter their ears? They would sune make a hue and cry as her gal wor next ter a pauper.'

'Dang all about th' neighbours: what dew I care what they say? What's it got ter dew along o' them?'

'Don't worrit, Bob dear,' said the girl, gently stroking his cheek. 'Yer know mother may ha' her fancies, but she be as gude as her word. She be saven' up—she ha' put by tew pound ten a'ready.'

'How long ha' she been saven' of it?' was Bob's question.

'Ever since yer arst me ter be yar wife.'

'And that's nigh on a year ago,' put in Bob with a sigh.

'Nine months and tew weeks and tew days and, let me see, how many hours—that wor even, after milking-time—I ha' never lost count of a minute since then, Bob'; and Selina nestled closer into the curve of her lover's shoulder.

'How much ha' this here silly garment got ter cost?' sternly demanded Bob, who was not to be coaxed into a show of good-humour he was far from feeling.

''Bout seven pound ten,' Selina answered with some hesitation.

'Why, dash it, at th' stroke she be saven' now that 'll take nigh on tew year more.'

'That be about it, Bob, and I shan't be far off twenty-one then, th' time mother thinks be th' lawfulest for a mawther ter leave her home. Sune enow, she say, in all conscience.'

'But I want ter be married this month, ter-morrow, ter-day, now; I can't and won't wait no tew years,' was the angry reply, and Bob thrust a sea-booted leg far into the soft sand.

The girl sighed. ''Tis no gude, want must be yar master,' she said. 'But we can meet up here every morning early afore I milk, and when mother be abed; that's wery, wery nice, Bob dear.'

Bob entirely declined to agree with her. ''T ain't so nice it mightn't be nicer, sitten' out here in th' breeze and chance time yar runnen' up ter my cottage when th' old 'oman be having her forty winks! I'm gotten' sick on it, that's true as gospel.'

'Bob! What a horrid thing ter say,' cried Selina. 'Sick on it—oh, that's cruel,' and the tears came into the blue eyes.

'T ain't that as I mean, 'Lina, yer knows right well,' and Bob pressed her closer to his side; 'but I want yer in my cottage, I want yer agen me allus.'

'And I want ter come, Bob, and so I shall some day—p'raps suner than yer thinks for. Kiss me once more, dear, for I can hear those old cows holleren' for me ter milk 'em; I must go. I'm dewen' all I can ter make more butter and save up for that white satin; I am, that's a fact.'

'Shall us come and twizzle th' old churn?' Bob asked as he kissed the upturned face.

'No. Mother 'ud be sure ter find out, and she 'on't ha' mucky men in her dairy, she say.'

'Oh, that's what she say, dew she? Then——' He was going to express himself with some vigour, but Selina stopped the words by a resounding kiss on the lips. She uncurled herself from his embrace, shook the sand from her skirts, and ran down the hill.

'Try and run up ter my cottage when th' old lady ha' her nap tea-time,' Bob shouted to the retreating figure, 'and tell her tew pound ten satin will be quite gude enow.'

The girl turned round and shook her head. Laughingly she shouted back: 'She say if I keep praten' on about it she'll ha' a string o' pearls for my neck, and that'll take a hundred years ter save for.'

'I'll make her swallow them one by one as she buy 'em,' muttered the indignant Bob. He turned towards his cottage, which stood up close under the lee of the next sandhill.

The gale moderated its fury during the morning and settled down to a steady blow, but the sea, having been lashed into frantic rage the night before, did not so soon forget its passion, and all day long showed white teeth in rows of breakers to within a short coffee-coloured space on the horizon.

Bob Jermy, a fisherman by trade, knew it was useless to try for dabs with his shore-lines, so, when the tide ebbed, he took spade and can and walked towards Lapping, digging for lug-worms on the likely sandbanks left by the receding waves. His mind ran on the conversation with Selina. For a long period he had been content with a solitary existence, but since the girl had come into his life the loneliness of his cottage—an isolated homestead, without a neighbour within a mile—appalled him, and what seemed to him the injustice of having to wait for a wife to satisfy the caprice of an old woman, made his thoughts during his search for lug-worms as gloomy as the clouds hanging in the sky.

He had wandered some miles up the coast when his eyes rested on a large, oblong packing-case, turning and twisting end over end, a half-mile out at sea.

'That there steamer be broken' up already,' he said aloud. 'Something's comen', that a sure moral.' He gazed up and down the beach and along the crests of the sandhills. 'Don't see no one pawking about, neither. By th' looks o' that there case that should come ashore nigh Coltsy Gap. I'll follow on it down.'

Suiting the action to the words, he walked abreast of the turning, tumbling box, which surely, though slowly, came nearer in shore.

Bob Jermy noticed with satisfaction that there was not a coastguard in sight, though he feared it would not be long before some telescope, searching the waves, would discern his prize. One hour passed, two hours, and Bob had reached the sandhill near his cottage before the packing-case touched the beach. It had been caught on the crest of a wave and was swiftly borne in to within twenty yards of the edging of foam fringing the shore. To his disgust he saw that it had hit a stone, which checked it in its shoreward career, and the wave, sweeping on and bursting at his feet, then retreating with a rattle of pebbles and a turbulent whirling of broken foam, rushed the box seaward again. Bob, giving another quick glance up and down the coast, made up his mind for action.

'I'll slump inter water and grab hold on her and chance getten' a swillen'; that look 'tickler valuable, that dew,' he told himself.

On went the box, a hundred yards or so down the coast, then in it came again, rolling over and over in the boiling surf.

Bob dashed in, heedless of the waves which poured through and round his legs and smashed into his face, and waded out to meet the box. Catching hold of it when it came alongside, he ran with it till it crunched against the shore, then, getting behind it, he put his back against it and held it till the retreating water of the spent wave surged past and gathered itself for another effort. On came the billow, curling and licking the green water and making a hissing noise as the volume of water lifted itself and the crest fell over and came seething down the incline of the wave; at last it reached him, enveloped him, and bore him with the box nearer the shore. Quickly regaining his feet, he shoved the box on, and then waited for the next breaker to fling the case into the bubbling surf on the edge of the tide. Bob turned it end over end till at last it lay high and dry on the sand.

For a few minutes he stood gasping and spluttering, spitting the salt water out of his mouth and shaking first one leg and then the other free of the water pouring out of the ends of his trousers.

'Lor!' he exclaimed, 'that be something cold, and I be dronched through and through. Dang me, but I hope there be something in that chest worth the haven', and that that there duddy fule, Softy Wright, don't come along, or any o' them knowen' coastguards when I be aprizen' of it open. Dew, that 'on't pay me for my trouble.'

Bob fetched his spade and turned the box lid-side uppermost. With difficulty he spelt out the direction :

Miss Lovett,
c/o Messrs. Packer & Co.,
Bombay.

'I wonder if that Miss Lovett ha' gone down in th' steamer,' he mused. 'Poor thing, poor thing,' he ejaculated, visions of a lady as beautiful as his own Selina coming into his mind. 'Anyhow, here goes,' and he wedged the sharp edge of the spade beneath the lid and prized it open by degrees. But there another difficulty presented itself; he found that the strong wooden case only covered a tin lining, and this had to be opened with a jack-knife and a marling-spike. Thick waterproof wrappings and folds of brown paper followed. 'Something fairly waluable by th' packen' on it,' he muttered, removing yet another covering. Then a large cardboard box came to view, with the words: 'Scarlet Silk Ball-dress,' written across it. The case, he saw, contained many boxes of this description.

'Well, I'll be danged, and double danged, if I hain't been fule enow ter walk three mile or more, followen' it along shore, scrappen' it out o' water, and getten' dronched through till my clothes be like a dwile hulled inter a bucket o' water, and all for a chest o' ladies' dresses which ain't no gude for narten as far as I be concerned. Now, if it had been cheeses or bacca, or even them old blood oranges at tew a penny—but ladies' dresses! Well, there, swang me on th' head for a fule!' Bob mechanically cut the string, and after fumbling with a quantity of tissue paper, pulled out a bright-red silk evening gown. 'Lor,' he exclaimed, as the skirt, held at arm's length, blew out in the breeze, 'fancy any woman going about in a garment like that; p'raps this here Lady Lovett use it for hunten' in.' He dropped the skirt with an angry jerk on the sand. 'Dang me, but this be th' westcut, I reckon,' and he looked curiously at the low-cut bodice. 'Hope there ain't no bulls nigh Bombay, wherever that may be, or she 'ouldn't stand a chance of her life with them duds on her.' He dropped the bodice with equal disgust and glared at the chest, spelling out the words on the next box.

'W-h-i-t-e S-a-t-i-n W-e-d-d-i-n-g-d-r-e-s-s,' he read. A ray of joy illuminated his face, and he staggered back to think. 'Selina, Selina, it's been sent us a purpose ter circumwent yar old mother,'

he cried. 'This'll dew for our wedden'; I'll make her ha' it; say it wor sent by an act o' Providence. I knowed th' box wor full o' walubles.' Hastily he cut the strings.

Unfortunately for Bob he had been observed some hours previously, gazing at the case tossing in the waves. It was washing-day at Lapping, and one woman, after pegging out her linen on the clothes-lines, set on a rough patch of ground the land side of the sandhills, had walked up and looked seawards. Her eye fell on the man on the shore, and she lay down and beckoned to a friend to join her. 'Look,' she said, 'that's Bob Jermy; he be waiten' for that case ter come ashore. Let's follow him inside th' dunes and wait till he get that on th' sand, and then cry shares.'

This suggestion pleased the other lady, but they, in their turn, had been observed, and they were soon joined by others. Soon a dozen or fifteen pairs of eyes watched Bob's movements from behind the hills. They waited till he had got the box ashore and had prized it open and saw him hold out the red dress to the breeze, then, with a yell, shrill and sharp, the throng of them swarmed down the sandhill, like carrion crows hurrying to a dying lamb.

'Share in, share in,' they shouted, and Bob, as he turned, found himself confronted by a flock of females. In a minute he was surrounded by the panting, shrieking crowd. One of the women snatched up the rejected red silk dress, three or four others clawed the box in his hands, to which he clung in desperation. 'Share in,' they repeated. 'Give him a side-wiper across th' skull,' one shouted in his ear. 'Leave go, Bob—share in, I say,' a second screamed. 'Swang him on th' head,' cried another. 'Yer dake's headed thing, let go,' yelled a fury, tearing at the box. Bob protested; he swore, he tugged, he tried to run, but flight was impossible with a woman hanging to each leg and three or four others pulling at the box. He was unable to move, and the next moment the cardboard gave way, and the white satin dress was whisked from him and passed to a woman at the back of the crowd. A girl dived into the case and brought out box after box, green ball-dresses, blue ones, tea-gowns, silk petticoats, blouses, all the feminine delights of what was evidently a smart Indian trousseau. Each box, as it came out, was seized and torn apart, and for a distance the shore was littered with cardboard and paper, blowing along like a flock of white ducks.

Bob tried hard to rescue his treasure. He did not trouble about the other things, but his mind was set on repossessing himself of the coveted satin gown. The greater his rage, the more the women

laughed and shoved him away from his prize. Realising at last that the more he tried to clutch the more likely the dress was to be torn, he sat down on the now empty case and swore aloud and roundly.

'Let's try 'em on and see who they fits,' one woman proposed, and the idea found favour with the others. Then was started what was nothing but a wild debauch of clothes. First one woman slipped off her skirt, another took off her bodice, and soon all were arrayed in the finery of the ball-room. One girl had got a large black picture hat stuck at the back of her head, and another had found a pair of blue silk stockings, which she vainly endeavoured to draw over her coarse woollen ones. With one accord they all joined hands, making a ring about the discomfited Bob, and danced and capered madly round him. His eyes were glued to the wedding-dress, and he could have wept as he saw the long train sweep up the sand while the wearer whirled around him.

'What's th' gude o' women's clothes ter yer, Bob? Why, yer hain't got a wife,' one girl screamed tauntingly. 'Yer can't ha' th' cheek ter want ter share in!' said an older woman, clutching convulsively the skirt of a gown which every moment threatened to trip her up. 'He ain't agoen' tew if he wants—there's only just enow ter go round,' said another; and the blue, red, green, and parti-coloured garments were jiggled and twirled around him till his head grew dizzy with the sight.

Suddenly an inspiration seized him. He had noticed that the women had deposited their clothes in a great heap on the sand but a few yards from him, and without a word of warning he sprang up and dashed through the dancing circle, ran with all his might to the pile of clothes, kicked them together, caught them up in one huge bundle, and ran towards his cottage.

For the moment the women did not realise his intentions, and it was not till he had tucked the bundle of sombre skirts and bodices under his arm that they grasped the meaning of his action.

'Dang his impercence. Come on, arter him, arter him,' and the shouting women ran in a bunch of gaudy colours, feathering out in a long stream as the pace and distance told on the less agile of the party. But Bob's start was too good a one; he had gained his cottage, bolted his door, closed the shutters, and mounted to his bedroom, the better to parley with the enemy, ere the panting females struggled down the sandhill.

The women, quick to realise that the tables had been turned on them, arrived in no good temper in front of Bob Jermy's cottage.

A hot altercation began, which Bob made worse by jeers and taunts.

'All right, old Bob, not so much of yar slaver; dew yer give I my clothes, don't yer'll ha' tew,' shouted one woman, hitching up a silk petticoat which refused to encompass her massive waist.

'Next time yer shows yar ugly face in our street yer'll know on it, dew my name ain't Emma England,' cried the girl with the velvet hat.

Two or three of the strongest of the party tried to force the cottage door, but the wood was good, and locks and bolts sound, and it held.

'Look here, Bob, yer'll ha' ter give us our clothes,' began a woman in more persuasive tones.

'Da' say,' said Bob with indifference.

'We can't go back to Lapping in this trim, that's a sure moral.'

'No,' jeered Bob, 'some o' yer as ha' only got them westcuts on don't look kind o' decent-like; 'Tilda, there, look as how she wor just going ter ha' a rinse down at the sink afore church Sunday mornen'.'

'Give us our clothes and don't make no more game of it,' pleaded the abashed 'Tilda.

'So I will when yer hand over those o' mine as yer ha' got on.'

'They ain't yars, we claim our share; yer knows th' rules o' th' beach as well as we do, Bob.'

'Yes,' replied Bob, 'I knows th' rules right enow, and I'll pass yar clothes out o' my window when yer pass them things in, not afore; so now yer knows.'

The women discussed the proposal among themselves. Their position was a hopeless one, they saw, but they made a last effort to come to better terms with the relentless Bob.

'If we give 'em back, yer will give us a share in what yer makes on 'em, eh, Bob?'

'Not a farthen,' was the answer.

An angry murmur rose from the crowd, and several members shook their fists at the figure in the dormer window, and expressed a hope as to the eventual punishment of such conduct.

'Well, I ain't going ter stop about here all th' arternune,' cried one woman, slipping out of the blue ball-gown and facing her companions in a short red petticoat. 'Dew yer dew as yer say, Bob, and give me my things, and I'll be even along o' yer some day. My old man, if he ha' got any spleen in him at all, will right-side yer, see if he don't.'

'I'll ha' th' white one fust,' said Bob, not regarding the woman who had spoken.

The woman in the wedding-dress reluctantly divested herself of it. Bob descended to his sitting-room and, opening the shutters, held up first one dress and then another for identification, and as each bright garment was handed in some much-worn, sombre dress was handed out.

'Maken' such an ondacent exhibition of us all,' protested a scantily clad girl, lovingly stroking the soft satin of the gown with which she could hardly find heart to part. 'Yer ought ter be struck blind by th' Almighty, yer ought. Yer'll get yarself inter trouble over this here job, mark my words on it, young fellow. I wouldn't be in yar shoon for something when I tells my chap about yar handiwork.'

'Da' say,' laughed Bob, handing out a rumpled gown.

In a few minutes the crowd had resumed the clothes of its every-day condition—all but the woman with the blue silk stockings, and she, having obtained possession of her dress, refused to carry out her part of the bargain. As Bob had gained a victory he could afford to be magnanimous, and after telling her she looked as if she had stepped into a bucket of lifeboat paint he bid them all a safe journey home.

'We'll go straight ter th' coastguards and peeche on yer. We'll blow th' gaff about yer broken' th' box open, which be agen th' law. Yer'll get a month, and sarve yer right tew,' screamed Emma England.

'Thank yer, thank yer for narthen. Dew yer go and inform; 't will save me th' walk I wor going ter take. Gude arternune tergether.' Bob closed his window, and the women, still hurling invectives at him, moved off in a body.

Bob's kitchen, piled up with frilled and tucked skirts and lace bodices, looked strangely furnished when Selina, as was her custom, walked up in the twilight. He paid no attention to the coloured frocks, but his whole mind was given to shaking the dry sand from the wedding-dress, and when Selina entered he was trying to smooth it out and fold it on the kitchen table.

'Whatever ha' yer been dewen' on?' was her cry of surprise at the strange display. 'Oh, Bob, what beautiful, beautiful dresses!' and she danced round the kitchen, holding up one vision of loveliness after another.

'Don't yer pay no regard ter that ther truck. Look at this,' said the man.

'Oh, Bob, it's real white satin; why, surely, it is meant for a wedden'-dress. Look, all the top is trimmed with pearls. Wherever did yer get it?'

'It wor washed up in a box along o' t'other things. I reckon this will settle matters with yar mother, Selina. Sent by an act o' Providence, no doubt on it. That wor directed ter a Miss Lovett out in Bombay.'

'Then she wor going ter be married; poor thing, p'raps she'll ha' ter wait like we have till she can get a dress. Can't we send it to her by post?'

'Not afore we ha' used it ourselves.'

'What dew yer mean, Bob?'

'What I say: yer ha got ter be married in this dress fust, so, if yer don't want ter keep th' poor thing waiting like yar mother ha' kept us, the suner yer right-side th' old lady and make her let yer go ter church along o' me in this here gown th' better.'

Selina danced round and round the shimmering garment spread out on the table. 'Bob, ain't it beautiful? Mother must give in; she'll ha' tew; this must ha' cost an Inder o' money.'

'Dew yer go up ter my room and slip it on, and don't be tew long about it,' were Bob's next injunctions.

Nothing loth, Selina did as she was bid. After taking a considerable time in the adornment of her person, she came proudly down the stairway, and stalked across the kitchen, showing off the train to every advantage.

Bob stood transfixed with admiration.

'There's only one thing wanten'; it fits me as if it had been made in Yarmouth,' said Selina.

'What's wanten?'

'Th' weil, Bob.'

'Lor, I knows—that there net stuff ter keep th' flies off. I remember clawing that at th' wery fust.' He pulled from under his guernsey a crumpled veil with a wreath of orange-blossoms attached.

Selina shook it out and put it over her head.

'My word on it, Selina, yer looks like an angel from heaven. I never did in all my days see narthen so beautiful,' said the enraptured Bob. He put his arm round the girl and tried to kiss her cheek.

But Selina's thoughts were for her finery, and not for her lover. 'Yer'll spoil it,' she exclaimed. 'Yer jamping on th' train; mind yer don't rend it.'

She turned to the little looking-glass on the wall. 'Bob, yer quite right, I never seed narten so beautiful,' she exclaimed. For some moments she found it impossible to withdraw her eyes from this vision of loveliness. 'But what about all them other clothes?' she asked as she turned away with a sigh.

Bob gave her a detailed account of the afternoon's proceedings, and ended by expressing a fear that it would not be long before the coastguards put in an appearance.

'Oh, but we must hide this dress somewhere,' said the girl, trembling for the safety of the garment which meant so much to both of them.

'That's th' trouble; them blessed women are sure ter ha' told 'em all about this dress. What shall us dew? I know,' Bob said after a moment's consideration. 'Yer knows Softy Wright, th' head man, he be half a fule, his head's crammed as full o' silly fancies as an egg is full o' meat. I've heard tell as he dursn't hardly go his rounds alone; however he got th' job be a mystery ter me. He be sure ter come arter th' things, and I'll pitch a tale inter him as 'll make his flesh creep. Yer, Selina, must go down ter th' beach and get inter th' case, and when we come down dew yer start up shrieken', he'll think that be th' ghost o' that Miss Lovett, who, I'll tell him, must ha' been drowned. He'll cut and run, I bet.'

'Oh, Bob, I dursn't; I'd be right scared myself, and it's dark and all.'

'No, there be a proper mune, and that'll help us. Don't be silly, my gal, 'tis our only chance o' gotten' wed. Think, Selina, what that mean ter th' pair on us. I'll come down with th' coastguards, so if they ain't scared I'll see as they don't hurt yer.'

Before Selina could raise fresh objections there came a loud knocking at the door. Immediate action was imperative. 'Step out o' my back door as quiet as yer can and run down ter th' beach. I won't keep yer long'; and Bob almost forced the girl out into the night.

'Now then, Master Bob Jermy, what tricks ha' yer been playen' on? This 'on't dew, yer knows, breaken' bulk on th' beach; that be illegal and a-breaken' o' th' law. There will be an inquisition over this—forty bob and a month, as sure as my name be Wright.'

'Da' say,' said Bob, with a half wink at the coastguard, who was going round the room fingering the piled-up garments. 'Only yer be bound ter hear my evidence, Mr. Clarver. Yer ha' been listenen' ter them old women's tales; just hear fust what I ha' got

ter say about th' matter.' Softy Wright and his comrade folded their arms and assumed their most official manner. 'I wor only peeken' in th' box afore I come ter lay information and claim my five shillen' reward, just ter see if that contained anything or wor full of emptiness, as I fust thought, when them mawthers came and ransacked th' lot and would ha' made off with 'em only I wor a bit tew clarver for 'em. 'Spect they told yer what happened, eh? There's th' dresses, yer can ha' 'em.'

'S'pose we can,' was the grumpy answer. 'Be they all here?' The men began to sort the garments. 'There's th' red one as they told us on, thought there wor a white one tew; that there gal, Sally Rope, said there wor a white satin one, th' best o' th' lot.'

'Yes, I knows all about it, and yer can ha' it in welcome if yer likes ter get it. But——'

'But what?' sharply demanded the second coastguard.

'Well, yer may put me down for a fule, or a liar, or what yer ha' a mind tew, but what I am going ter tell yer is real honest. Arter them women left me I thought in my mind as to what I should dew with this here truck, me knowen' th' law, as yer knows, and not wishen' ter get inter a muddle along o' th' authorities. I say ter myself, "Put 'em back in th' box as yer found 'em, Bob." So fust of all I carried that white 'un down—that's about half an hour ago. Well, I lays that in th' case, and wor going down with some of them others when as I got nigh th' box th' second time up starts a wision, or a ghost, or something, all dressed in this here wedden' garment. That box o' dresses belonged, as I see by th' writen', ter a Miss Lovett, and I guess she ha' been drowned, poor thing, and her wedden', which I reckon she wor going out tew in Bombay, being on her mind, her ghost got inter them clothes, and if yer likes ter go and see for yarselves dew yer dew it—I won't go nigh th' blarmed thing any more. Dew yer go and get that dress-box and see if what I say ain't gorspel.'

The two men looked incredulous, but to his satisfaction Bob saw that Softy Wright hesitated to leave the cottage. He added impressively: 'And when th' warmen thing began ter move in my direction I slung my hook, bloomen' sharp.'

'Rot,' said the other coastguard, 'let's go and ha' a look for ourselves.'

'Well, Bob must come tew,' his less valiant partner insisted.

'Oh, wery well, if I must, s'pose I must,' answered the reluctant Bob,

The moon was low in the heavens, and as the men mounted the white hill their shadows were thrown in long straggling lines in front of them. Only the distant roar of the breakers and the sighing of the wind broke the eerie stillness of the desolate shore, and the fear which Bob simulated took possession of his two companions. Softy shuddered at his own shadow threading its way among the maze of hill-tops. Suddenly Bob brought them to a halt. 'Look, there she lay,' and he pointed to the case, lying out in a streak of moonlight on the edge of the tide.

'Well, there ain't narthen there,' said the second coastguard, recovering courage at the sight of something so material as a box.

'Wait till yer gets agen it; I ain't going no further, that's a sure moral,' said Bob significantly. He planted his feet firmly in the sand as he spoke. Softy Wright and his mate waded through the sand towards the case.

They had approached to within twenty yards of it when there arose on the stillness a long low wail which brought them to an abrupt stop.

'Listen,' Softy whispered, heart in mouth. Slowly a veiled white figure rose up into the moonlight, a pair of arms were lifted above its head, and from the hidden lips rang out an unearthly cry.

'Struth Bob be right, 'tis th' ghost of th' drowned woman,' said Softy, shaking with fear. His eyes were glued to the swaying, moaning figure. 'I ain't going nigh it'; and he began to walk backwards, the irresistible influence of the shimmering form riveting his gaze. 'By Gawd, she be a-floaten' towards us,' he shouted to his companion, and in another moment he was running at full speed towards Bob on the sandhills, and the other man was running after him.

'Well, there, what dew yer think on it?' panted Bob, the cottage door safely closed behind them.

'Think,' echoed Softy, 'I think as how I ain't a-going nigh it no more. There ain't no list o' the things, and we'll take what's here, and let th' tide wash th' box away. I'll see as yer gets yar five shillen' reward, Bob,' he added graciously, 'and we will send down for these things in the morning.' The two men departed, determined to take an inland walk home.

Bob went outside, and the whistling cry of the curlew reached ears listening for it on the shore. Selina crept in by the back door, and for the moment was too overcome with laughter to listen to the tale of Bob's stratagems. 'I'll take off these clothes,' she said

presently, 'and dew yer kind o' happen ter come in accidental-like when I ha' got 'em on this evening.'

Selina's mother, a hard-featured, tall, gaunt woman, with hair so thinned on the top of her head that the tightly pulled back tresses showed streaks of skull between them, was the widow of a farmer in a very small way of business. She was a proud woman, and had one source of satisfaction in life that could never be taken from her: she had married beneath her. In her veins, as she told the neighbours, considerably more than an ounce of blue blood flowed.

When Bob Jermy arrived at the little farm Selina was again arrayed in the wedding-dress, and in Mrs. Grimmer's large front parlour it showed to greater advantage than in the smaller room of the cottage under the sandhills. Mrs. Grimmer, clasping her hands in rapture, was exclaiming:

'Selina Una Grimmer, yer looks wholly a duchess, yer dew. My word, I never seed yer look so handsome; but there, it takes a drop or tew o' blue blood ter show off a dress of that magnificence, and if it wor hangen' on th' back of a princess or a bishop's daughter it couldn't look a patch ter what it dew on yars. Royal, I calls it; regal, majestic,' she added in a shrill crescendo.

With a glance Selina telegraphed the fact that all was going satisfactorily. Mrs. Grimmer turned to Bob with an unusual graciousness of manner. 'Well, Bob, come ter see her Royal Highness? Don't she look splendacious? Don't it set on her tew? She look a lot different ter what th' parson's daughter up at Stanfield did when she wor married; but there, they ain't much breed, poor things; not as how I blames 'em, for yer must stop in what yer be born inter. I wonder what every one 'll say when they sees Selina walk up th' aisle with that here lovely train sweepen' up th' dust behind her.'

'Then yer'll let us get married sune,' broke in Selina, striking the iron while it was hot.

Mrs. Grimmer was not to be hastily moulded into shape. 'I'll see,' was the curt reply. 'Ah, Bob,' she went on, 'I wor wed in a similar gown when I throwed myself away on her poor father. My name wor Grey, yer knows; I heerd tell it once wor De Grey, an old French family, ignobled they wor, and then had all their rights and coats of arms and sichlike taken from 'em. But they never could take th' blue blood out of our weins; look at Selina Una Grimmer for an example.'

'Yes, and she'll show her high birth off more than ever in such

a dress as this,' said Bob. He added artfully: 'Th' neighbours 'll think as how yer must be a rich woman ter ha' bought a dress o' this quality in so short a time of saven', Mrs. Grimmer.'

Mrs. Grimmer took the bait. 'Fare ter me yer'd better put out th' banns next Sunday, Bob; there don't seem no gude o' waiten', and——'

'And with th' money yer ha' been so kind ter save up for Selina's wedden'-dress yer could buy yarself a proper gown as 'ud set 'em in a blaze—parson's wife and all them warmens o' Lappingers,' added Bob, looking meaningly at Selina.

While Mrs. Grimmer was weighing the respective merits of purple velveteen, 'with a fleck or tew of old gold beaden' on it,' and royal blue cloth, 'with a dash o' crimson just for cheerfulness-like,' Bob went outside. Selina crept after him. Together they stood in the full moonlight, the girl holding her shimmering skirts closely to her side, her arms, bare to the elbow, gleaming out of the costly laces with which the dress was trimmed. Bob drew her to him and kissed her again and again.

'Tis a little bit frightening, ain't it, Bob?' she whispered, hiding her face on his shoulder.

'What?' Bob asked anxiously.

'Th' banns—three weeks—'tis such a short time; why, we thought as how we should ha' ter wait tew years.'

'I never did; I never meant tew. I told yer as how I wanted yer at once—this very minute. And this ha' come by an act o' Providence, Selina; and,' added Bob impressively, 'yer knows, my gal, that never answers ter run contrary ter acts o' Providence.'

CHARLES FIELDING MARSH.

The Girl Who isn't There.

FATE has been kindly, heaven knows,
 To one so sad and lone ;
 For you are sweet as any rose,
 And you are all my own ;
 Yet sometimes, if I pause awhile
 From playing with your hair,
 I catch her faint, elusive smile—
 The Girl who isn't there !

I never call *her* sweet or good,
 No more than wind or star.
 Her soul, in some large solitude,
 Has travelled from afar.
 I love you : only I can guess
 Just what you'll say, and where.
 She has strange words, strange silences—
 The Girl who isn't there.

You're like a mass of rose-leaves, which
 Within a vase exhale
 A perfume exquisite and rich,
 A scent that cannot fail.
 But she's a fragrance faint and fine
 Upon the changing air—
 The Girl who never can be mine,
 •The Girl who isn't there !

Or you're a shelter from the storm—
 Perchance no palace vast ;
 But it is safe and strong and warm,
 And I may rest at last—

THE GIRL WHO ISN'T THERE.

But she! We face the sea and wind,
And we have done with care,—
We two alone—and she is kind,
The Girl who isn't there!

I've read you through : the book is done,
Still honoured, still beloved,
I've proved your virtues one by one,
Your very limits proved.
Her being if I should rehearse—
Spirit and flame and air!
I'd have to range the universe—
The Girl who isn't there!

And if I dared her hand to clasp,
Or touch her lips to-day,
I know that from beneath my grasp
Her soul would slip away,
To realms wherein I could not grope;
And 'twould be half despair
To love her, half eternal hope—
The Girl who isn't there!

But you are there. The trodden road
Contented I pursue.
I reach your ultimate abode,
The very heart of you . . .
Yet haunts my dream another bliss,
A glory poignant, rare,
The fleeting essence that I miss,
The Girl who isn't there!

So be it! I have won my goal,
No more I wander wide;
And it may be one's inmost soul
Is never satisfied.
Only sometimes I catch my breath,
I wonder unaware
If I may find her after death—
The Girl who isn't there!

MAY KENDALL.

Quartermaster-Sergeant Penhall.

PENHALL was just sitting on one of the seats between Sandgate and Folkestone, thinking what fine fellows the D.C.L.I. were, and how superior they were to all the rest of the foot, horse, and guns—which was the order in which he placed them, though I have known others place them differently. He passed on to think what a fine fellow he himself was, and what an irresistible lady-killer. Just then a young lady—oh, quite the lady—sat down at the other end of the seat, which was made to hold four. So, of course, Penhall had to squeeze himself tight up to his end that he might not crowd her. She took out the *Family Herald*, unfolded it, and began to read. When Penhall's eye caught hers over the top of the paper, he blushed like a girl should but doesn't do. When their eyes met for the twelfth time he ventured to say :

'It's a fine evenin', miss.'

'A remarkably fine evening,' said she.

'You are fond of readin', miss?'

'I love it, especially when it's all about dukes and duchesses, and earls and baronets, and military men. I am reading about a lovely captain in the Army now. Are you a captain in the Army?'

'No, miss; I'm a full private.'

'Oh, a full private. Is that different from any other sort of private?'

'Sometimes,' said Penhall, with a reminiscent smile.

'As I was saying, I'm reading about this captain now, and I do so long for next week to see what becomes of him when he faces the haughty baronet, who claims the Lady Adela for his wife. I just love soldiers—in books, you know.'

'Would you come for a short stroll?'

'If you like.'

So they strolled and talked of literature, and the Army, and other matters. It did strike Penhall once to offer her a little light refreshment; but she was so much the lady that he did not like to suggest it.

'And will you be out this way to-morrow night?' asked Penhall.

'No,' said she; 'Wednesday is my evening out. But I shall be out to church on Sunday evening.'

'Along here?'

'I may be along here on my way to church about half-past six.'

Penhall was down on his luck about that time. He had no money to buy extras, so he stopped in barracks, and put up with slingers for Sunday afternoon tea. Then he went down towards Folkestone; and, about half-past six, the young lady, prayer-book in hand, passed along.

'Good evenin', miss,' said Penhall.

'Fancy meeting you here!'

'Why, you told me——' began the unsophisticated Penhall.

'But I never thought you'd be here.'

'Didn't you?' said he simply. 'I thought you did.'

'Not for a moment,' said she decidedly; and Penhall thought he must have gone too far, and therefore said 'Good evenin',' with intent to go back to barracks. But she said:

'Are you going to church?'

'I did go with the regiment this mornin',' said Penhall.

'I am going for a walk to Cheriton. I suppose you aren't going that way?'

'If I'm not in the way,' said the embarrassed Penhall.

'Not at all,' said she.

So they started on a walk which all the other Folkestone couples seemed to be taking. The other couples were arm-in-arm or arm and waist; but Penhall was too shy for that. The other couples didn't seem to mind them, and Mary Jane didn't seem to mind the other couples; but Penhall was as shy as a rooky with a Martini when he fears it may kick. He was so new to the game of walking out that he wanted a county to Mary Jane and himself.

So they walked and walked. Mary Jane talked and talked. Penhall listened, and didn't know what to do. With other folk about he didn't even like to kiss her good-bye. But she got her lips so near his that even Penhall couldn't help seeing that a kiss was expected of him. When a D.C.L.I. man sees what is expected of him he never fails.

These walks and talks went on for several Sundays and Wednesdays, till Penhall began to get tired. Cornwall is a poor county in money, and a Cornishman is brought up to look not only on both sides of his halfpenny before he spends it, but on the edge too.

If he gets rich he soon gets out of that bad habit. But he doesn't get out of it on a soldier's pay; and taking a girl out comes expensive. It's not so in London. There Guards are at a premium, and the girl pays for both, and gives Tommy a shilling, or perhaps two, for his trouble. In Shorncliffe girls are at a premium. So Penhall began to play fast and loose, and to miss his appointments; and a month elapsed without his meeting Mary Jane.

One evening he was walking along the parade when he saw another young lady to whom Mary Jane always used to bow. This young lady came up to him and said:

'What a pity about Mary Jane!'

'What about Mary Jane?' asked Penhall.

'Don't you know? When did you see her last?'

'Bout a month ago,' said Penhall indifferently.

'She's got typhoid fever.'

'My dear life,' said Penhall. 'Where is she?'

'Her mistress has sent her to the hospital.'

Now, the other girl evidently thought one girl was the same as another to a soldier, and that he would probably ask her to go for a walk; but he didn't. He just went home to barracks and thought. He was a slow thinker was Penhall. So it came about that it was the next evening before he thought out what he wanted. It came to him like a flash as he tightened his belt a hole after brushing up his forelock, just before he went out after tea. He wanted to see Mary Jane.

'It's a funny thing,' said Penhall to himself, 'that when I could see Mary Jane I got tired of it. Now I can't, I want to see her again. An' such is life. If I ever get into Parliament, I'll pass a law against firearms—even airguns—and I'll put all men who wear red coats into a field with bulls; and then—perhaps I'll alter my mind, and increase the strength of the Army.'

So he went round to the hospital.

'Can I see a maiden you have here called Mary Jane?'

'Other name?'

'I do declare for 't I do forget her other name. What did she say it was?'

'Now, how do I know, Tommy? You can't have me all to yourself to answer your questions, if I did help to buy you your red tunic.'

'I did think,' said Penhall slowly and thoughtfully, 'that I an' the other gentlemen in the Service did pay up for these hospitals, an' did buy you that coat an' hat.'

'You and your gents!' said the porter, with a sneer.

'Scuse me, I said gentlemen of the Service, not gents of a draper's shop. Now, have you got a maiden here called Mary Jane, who has had typhoid fever?'

'How do I know? Get out, Tommy; you've been here long enough.'

'I did help,' said Penhall slowly and pensively, as a man who ponders deeply, 'to buy you that coat an' that hat. If I don't get a civil answer, civvy, to a civil question inside of two minutes by that clock, I am no longer civvy but Service. I'll smash as much of that hat as I do think I did pay for; I'll tear up as much of the coat as I think I did pay for; an' I'll scat abroad as much of the pig inside 'em as I do think I've paid him in wages.'

'If you don't mind, sir,' said the flurried porter, 'sitting down for a moment, I'll make all inquiries, sir, and let you know in a moment, sir.'

'Righto; that's all Sir Garnet. I like to see you civvies act up to your name.'

The porter hastily turned over the leaves of his book.

'Young woman—lady, sir, with typhoid?'

'Yes, I reck'n.'

'Came in a month ago. Name Hoggard.'

'Now I do think of 't,' said Penhall reflectively, 'she did tell me Howard. Same thing, I suppose. An' how's she gettin' on?'

'Improving, sir; I heard the doctor say so.'

'I'll just step up an' see her.'

'Impossible, sir. Not a visiting day, sir.'

'I'll just step up an' see her.'

'Not visiting hours either, sir.'

'I'll just step up an' see her.'

'She's not well enough, sir; but I'll fetch the house-surgeon to you.'

'All right; bring along your C.O.'

The house-surgeon came. Penhall stood stiffly to attention and saluted.

'Well, my man, what can I do for you?'

'Mary Jane Hoggard in hospital here, sir. I do wish to see her.'

'You seem to take a great interest in her. Brother, I suppose?'

'No, sir; chum.'

'She's not well enough to see you; but I will take any message for you.'

'I do wish to give my own message, sir.'

'Write it down, then, and I'll give it to her.'

So Penhall wrote :

'Will you be Mrs. Private Penhall ?'

'I never should have got married,' said Penhall afterwards, 'if I hadn't wanted her because I couldn't get her ; an' 'twas the best thing 't ever happened to me, for if I hadn't had her to nag me into it, I should be Private Penhall now, instead of being the quarter-bloke.'

G. STANLEY ELLIS.

A Tenant Farmer's Diary of the Eighteenth Century.

THE days when one could pick up an old oak table or valuable pieces of silver pewter for a mere song in some out-of-the-way labourer's cottage are gone for ever, and country folk can now drive as hard a bargain as their town cousins.

Still, only last summer I had a stroke of good luck during a holiday ramble in the Lincolnshire wolds, and for a few shillings became the proud possessor of a carved oak panel about three feet square. It had evidently served as the door of a cupboard, and, being too thin for the purpose, an additional piece of wood, of the same size, had been nailed to it. A few weeks since I determined to make use of my purchase, and to let it into the front of an oak cabinet, and I thereupon commenced to split it carefully and reduce it to its original thickness. What was my astonishment on so doing to find, placed between the two pieces of wood, several pages of manuscript, loosely joined together. The carved piece was evidently thin towards the centre, and the sheets of manuscript had been used for padding, and there had remained for close on a hundred years. I was justly proud of my 'find,' and for the moment imagined myself the discoverer of another Shakespearean quarto; but on further perusal I found that the manuscript consisted of a diary of a Lincolnshire farmer from the year 1756 until 1801. On the first page was inscribed :

ELIAS MELTON.

His Book 1756.

*Do not Steal this
Book for fear
of Shame
For heare you
See the owner's
Name.*

That same evening I wrote to the mistress of the farmhouse where I had made my fortunate purchase, and asked if I could have rooms there from the following Saturday to Monday, and I subsequently found myself once more in Lincolnshire, endeavouring to discover any facts relating to Elias Melton.

My search was not in vain, and I soon learned that the very farm at which I was staying had been tenanted by Meltons from 1680 until 1801, when it was leased to the great-grandfather of the present owner. Elias Melton's immediate successor had evidently taken the diary to strengthen one of his cupboard doors. From the church registers I further gathered that Elias Melton was the last of his race; previous to the year 1756, the baptismal, marriage, and burial services had been read over numerous Meltons in the small Lincolnshire church among the wolds, which contrasted so strangely with the grand old ecclesiastical buildings of the fens. After 1756 no further entries of the family occurred, with the sole exception of 'Elias Melton, buried October 21st, 1801.'

The last bearer of the name was an only child, and, further, remained a bachelor throughout his life. The fair sex is never directly referred to in his diary; possibly his suit was rejected by the Lincolnshire maiden of his choice, and he thereupon resolved to spend the rest of his days in single blessedness. Maybe he found comfort in his diary—perhaps 'commonplace book' would be a more suitable title to apply to the manuscript, which is not merely a summary of his daily life, but contains references and records of public events, recipes for his own ailments as well as for those of his animals, poems and hymns, a few riddles, passages transcribed from books, accounts of the three journeys he undertook to Stamford, Lincoln, and the coast, and the receipts of his tradesmen's and labourers' bills. It is easy to distinguish the passages he copies from different authors, as the spelling of his own compositions is original throughout. His use of capitals is most irregular, the long 's' is very frequent, 'my self,' 'where ever' occur always as separate words, surprised is 'surprized,' complete 'compleat,' excel 'excell,' a head 'an head,' &c. Horncastle, from which town his farm is distant some six miles, is spelt 'Horncessell,' and Nottinghamshire becomes 'Notigam-shear.'

The writing, in a firm, round hand, is clear and distinct, and Elias carefully follows the advice he gives on the second page of his book.

All you that in fair writing would Excell
 How much you write, Regard not, but how well.
 Bear your Pen lightly, keep a Steady Hand
 And that the way fair writing to Command.
 From Blots keep Clean your Book & always mind
 To have your letters all one way in Clin'd.
 Make Every letter, perfect, full and Small
 And Keep a due proportion in them all
 On Care depends the Beauty of Each line
 For that alone will make your Art to shine.

He tells us that the rental of his farm is 65*l.* and the tithe 20*l.* The acreage is not mentioned, and it is difficult to determine it exactly after the extensive drainage operations undertaken in his neighbourhood during the last century.

His poor rate comes to 11*s.* 3*d.*, his church rate to 7*s.* 6*d.* He mentions the prices he obtained for his farm produce in the year 1775: his wheat sells at 5*s.* to 7*s.* the bushel, his beans at 4*s.* 4*d.* the bushel, his oats at 15*s.* to 19*s.* the quarter, and his barley at 23*s.* the quarter, his hay seeds at 6*s.* the quarter, and his wool at 8*s.* 6*d.* the stone. His labourers receive 8*d.* to 10*d.* per day, and in 'corn-harvest' 1*s.* He pays 4*d.* per yard for thatching, and grumbles at the expense of it in 1758, when the 'ould House and Barne and Stable whas Puld down and a new Barne and Stable whas Built.' Most of his bills are written out by himself, and receipted in his compendious pocket-book. Here are some examples:

May 12, 1759 I promis to pay or order to Eli eight pounds upon demands for valley received.

Pade for 69½ Roods of Banking at 16^d per Rood

Comes to £4 12 8

Received the contents of this bill

is mark X

By me Willum Allbones

26 October 1759.

Received the 24 September 1761 of Mr. Timothy Draper Fifty pounds impart of Indigo sold him the 22 Instant per me Elias Melton.

	£	s.	d.
New Silver Cup with Lid . . .	6	0	0
Given old silver 6 oz. 5 dwt. . .	1	12	10
Old lid 1 oz. 3 dwt.		6	0
	4	1	2

Received by mee Thomas Bailey

November 10th 1780.

To Master Smith, December 1794, 4 Shouse on the Black horse, 2 Shouse on the young bay Mare.

For the years 1797 paid to Wilum Howcroft

	£	s.	d.
for fellin wood	1	4	0
Brushin the wood	0	13	6
	<hr/>		
	1	17	6
	<hr/>		

On Friday, October 25, 1760, George II. died suddenly, and Elias Melton learned the tidings after church on Sunday; and the gaffers' talk in the churchyard that day was of the young King, and the expected change in the political situation. News had come to the village from Horncastle market that George II.'s daughter-in-law had brought up her son to despise his grandfather's custom of allowing himself to be ruled by his Ministers, and that Augusta of Saxe-Coburg had dinned the words, 'George, be a king!' unceasingly into the grandson's ears.

In 1763 Melton refers to the Peace of Paris, and gives the names of his political friends who agree with him in thinking that Pitt would have made far better terms than Lord Bute. Later in the same year he rides to Stamford, to attend the 'bull-running' in St. George's Street on November 13. He makes no remark on the cruel sport beyond saying that the unfortunate animal was first teased by 'bipeds,' and then dogs were set on him. The passages to and from St. George's Street were blocked up with waggons and vehicles from the surrounding villages, and Elias had to remain throughout the day in the same position he had taken up in the early morning. He rides home through Bourn, stopping at Bowthorpe Park to see the celebrated oak-tree there. The lower part was used as a feeding-place for calves, the upper as a pigeon-house. The hollow trunk measured 48 feet in circumference, and five years later the diary tells us that it was neatly fitted up inside with tables and seats, and could contain a 'tea-drinking' party of sixteen persons. When the tables and chairs were removed, there was standing-room for twenty-eight people. The sight of the dogs attacking the Stamford bull evidently brought before Elias Melton's mind the danger of hydrophobia, and at the next Horncastle market he asks one of his friends for the address of a person who professes to cure this disease.

Cure for Hydrophobia or madness.

Mary ann Wallis

Grandaughter of the late M^{rs} Kedman of Caxton
and is now residing at

Combbeton

and continues Making Drinks, as usual, for Christians, Dogs, and Cattle of all descriptions.

Mary ann Wallis

Comberton, near Cambridge.

Elias is also struck with the amount of strong ale consumed on November 13 at Stamford, for he writes a short composition on drunkenness, after which follows a recipe for ginger beer.

Drunkenness Expells Reason, drowns the Memory, distempers the Body, diminishes Strength, inflames the Blood, Causes internal and External and incurable Woundes, is a Witch to the Sences, a Devil to the Sowl, a thief to the Purse, the Beggar's Companion, a wife's Woe, Children's Sorrow, the picture of a beast and self murderer who drinks to others Good Healthe and robs himself of his owne.

To make Ginger Beere.

Take 5 Gallons of warter, 2½ lbs. Sugar, ½ lb. of Hops, ½ oz. of Ginger. Boil it a hour, then strean it, let it stand untill New-Milk warm, then put two spoonfulls of yeast, put it in a Barrell and it will be fit to drinke the next day.

Ten years later, in September 1773, Elias gives himself another holiday, and sets off for Lincoln races, which were held that year for the first time on the Carholme, for the new racecourse had been for weeks the subject of conversation in the neighbouring markets.

Many pages of his diary are taken up with descriptions of the only city he ever visits. He can find no words with which to express his admiration of the cathedral, his 'Soule is absorbed,' his 'sences scattered,' he 'dare scarcely breathe,' and he feels 'not of this worlde but an habitant of some other sphere.' He is shown Tom Thumb's gravestone, the Lincoln Imp, and Great Tom. He inveighs against the dirt and rubbish kept in the Cloisters, hopes the wooden spires on the western towers will not suffer from storm and wind as the lead-covered timber spire on the great central tower did in January 1548, and is disappointed in the size of 'Big Tom,' which he had understood could only be managed by twelve men. One of the last entries in his diary is 'October 13th, 1801. Big Tom was runge yestereve by 24 old women at the Peace rejoicings.'

In the city he is specially struck with Newport gate, the Stonebow with its gilded sculpturing, the castle gateway, and the ruins of the castle itself.

He stands on the unpopulated 'Motherby Hill,' and traces the country roads into Lincoln, skirting the large undrained pools and lakes of the great tract of level land, and in the distance he can discern flocks of waterfowl rising from the surrounding marshes. But the city itself is short of drinking-water during his stay, and he comments on the 'strife of careful housewives to secure at least a kettlefull for breakfaste, their haste being suche as may be imagined in a besieged citie.' He wanders by the side of the river, and sees the 'schouts' in which the farmers, whose lands adjoin the Witham, come to market, bringing their produce and returning with their purchases. He remarks on the insecurity of the waterside, as but a few days before his visit a man had slipped on the greasy pathway, and, falling into the river, had been drowned.

Following the description of Lincoln, numerous riddles are entered in the diary, and doubtless his companions at the 'Saracen's Head' entertained him with them.

When first I to my mistress Came
 Her waiting Maid to bee
 She was at least without dispute
 Seven times as old as mee.
 When I had served twenty yeares
 Months ten, Days half a Score,
 I to y^t Time did Add five Houres
 And fifteen Minuts more.
 This Time being Spent, and Clear run out
 I found my Selfe to bee
 Exactly when I came to Counte
 Just half as ould as shee.
 Now you y^t Are in Figuers Skild
 Do you to Mee explain
 What Age we are, w^t Age we where, when
 wee together came?

Four men bought a Hive of Bees for 20 Shilling, of which A must pay one third, B one forth, C one fifth, D one sixth. What must each pay of ye 20 Shilling?

When first ye Marriage Knot was tyed,
 Be twixt my Wife and mee
 My age did Hers as far excede
 As three time's three does three

A TENANT FARMER'S DIARY

But after ten and half ten yeares,
 We Man and Wife had beene,
 Her age came up as neare to mine,
 As Eight is to sixteen.
 What were our ages on ye Wedding Day,
 Now pray!

As I went through the garden gap
 Who should I meete but Dick Redcap
 A sticke in his hande, a stone in his throate,
 If you tell mee that Riddle, I'll give you a
 groate. (A Cherrie.)

A Riddle, a Riddle, maree,
 What can my Riddle bee?
 Thro' a Rocke, thro' a Reelee,
 Thro' an oulde spinning Wheele,
 Thro' a Miller's hopper, thro' a Bag of Pepper,
 Thro' an oulde Shin-shanke Bone,
 Such a Riddle as never was Knowne. (A Worme.)

Elias only writes down the answers to the last two riddles; his memory evidently serves him for the first three.

The diary tells us that 'the Prince of Wales won the Derby in the year 1788, aged 26 yeares,' and that 'Eclipse dyed on February 27, 1789'; and after these two references no further mention is made of the Turf.

Elias gives us no words of his own on the horrors of the French Revolution, which must have formed a frequent subject of discussion in the Horncastle taverns. There are three bare entries concerning it:

Jan. 21, 1793. Louis, King of France, was executed.

Oct. 16, 1793. Queen Marie Antoinette suffered death on the guillotine.

July 28, 1794. Robespierre was guillotined.

Nelson was apparently Elias Melton's only hero; the diary contains a long descriptive account of the Battle of the Nile, evidently written in the snowy days of December 1798. News had reached England that Nelson had been wounded in the head by an iron splinter, and had been carried below while the battle was still raging. Elias hopes that he has not been 'done to deathe'; but a few weeks later he is able to write in his book that his hero is restored to health. The following winter one of Nelson's

sailors, invalided home, tells the farmer in Horncastle market-place that his gallant commander would accept no surgeon's aid until the men previously wounded had been tended. The words, 'I will take my turn with my brave fellows,' are quoted.

The years 1792, 1797, and 1799 are remarkable for their heavy rainfall :

Gret Fluds uppon the low Lands settrede, September 3, 1792.

Jun 4, 1797

A gret Flod on the Lowlands.

September the 17 and 18, 1799, the biggest Flod on the lowland that ever had beene of 30 yeare.

Darltou, Notigamshear
about 2 mils

May the 12, avery gret flod on the low Lands in the yeare 1799.

The floods have increased the number of rats on the farm, and ague and decline are more prevalent than usual; consequently recipes occur for consumption, coughs, ague, the extirpation of rats, &c., while the damp walls of the house must be washed with 'sulphutic' acid, 'which decomposes the delinquescent salts that prevent the walles from drying.'

For a Decline.

Two Handfulls Oak Tree Moss. Boil it in two Quarts of Spring Water. Boil the Moss in the Water to one quart and strean it, get two oz. of Sugar Candy, two oz. Spanish Juice and half a Pint of White Wine and add to it.

Doctor Charlsworth's Recit for the Ague.

1 Scruple Sulfate Quinine

11 Drops Sulfuric Acides

8 oz. of Water.

Take two Tablespoon Fulls every four Houres.

To Kill Rats.

1 Quarter of Malt Floure, 1 lb. of Hunney, 1 Pint of Milk, 1 lb. of Roast drippings, 1 oz. of Oile of Annaseeds, 1 oz. of Supplementes. All made into Paste and laide in Small Balls.

But in spite of the recipes Elias copies out, and probably tries, he seems unable to shake off the effects of a chill he had caught in the late autumn of 1799; and the following June the Horncastle

apothecary advises him to try the effects of a three weeks' sojourn at Frieston Shore. In the course of a few days he sets off to ride to Boston, and here he thinks of putting up, as a car runs daily from the town to the shore in time for bathing at high water; but he finally decides to enjoy the advantage of the sea-breeze, and stays at one of the two Frieston hotels situated just within the bank.

He sees plenty of company during his visit, as guests from Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire frequently arrive either by coach or steam-packet to Boston. Morning and afternoon he hires a gig and goes for an 'airing on the beache'; and the rest of the day he sits on the seat in front of the hotel, and passes the time in conversation with the other visitors or in writing in his diary.

After his stay at Frieston some Boston friends advise him to spend a few days at Skegness, and assure him that the road thither is 'more comparable to a gravel walke than a high-way.' Elias comments on it favourably in his diary, and says that on leaving Boston, where he pays one halfpenny toll, he passes no other tollgate for a distance of thirty miles.

He is disappointed with the little town of Wainfleet. He had heard that in Roman times it possessed a salt-manufactory and, later, a mint where silver pennies were coined; now its oyster fisheries and its haven have disappeared, and its narrow, dirty ditch hardly contains enough water in which to 'floate a schout.'

A ride of another five miles brings him to Skegness, and he spends two nights in the only lodging-house there. The village does not compare favourably with Frieston Shore, and there is not 'as much company because of its greater distance from Boston.' At intervals along his route Elias caught sight of the Roman banks shutting out the sea, and he writes in his diary that 'No doubt the Romanes enclosed the reste of the coaste of England in a similar manner.' Evidently the weather during his sojourn at Frieston Shore had not been clear enough for him to catch sight of the steeper coast of Norfolk across the Wash.

He rides home by way of Spilsby, and the apothecary tells him that this extra exertion has told on him, and that he should have returned by the level road leading direct from Boston to his farm. The diary also shows that the longer journey by Skegness has not suited its writer; the details of the work on the farm become less minute, the writing is very shaky, and the increasing physic bill is constantly bemoaned.

A friend lends him a book entitled *A Breviary of Health* by

Andrew Boorde, Phisycche Doctoure, an Englysmen, anno 1551.
From it Elias copies out an amusing extract called 'A Cure for the Lazy Fever':

Among all the fevers I had almost forgotten the fever-burden with the whiche many yonge men, yonge women, mayden and other yonge persons be sore infected now-a-dayes; the cause of this infirmitie doth come naturally as els by evyll and slothful brying-up; if it do come by nature then the fever is incurable, for it can never out of the fleshe that is bred in the bone, but if it come by slothful brying-up it may be holpen by diligent Labour. Thus, take a stick or wan of a yard of length and more, and let it be as grete as a man's fynger, and with it anynt the back and shoulders well morning and evening and do this twenty-one dayes, and if this fever wyl not be holpen in that time let them beware of waggynge on the gallowes, and whyles they do take theyr medicine put no butterwort in theyr pottage.

This same physician recommended the poor people who came to him for treatment to refrain from washing their faces more than once a week, although they might rub them over daily with a scarlet cloth.

On May 4, 1801, Elias attends Boston sheep fair for the last time; he is too unwell to ride there, and he and a friend drive over together in a gig they hire from Horncastle. They return the same evening, neither of them having made any purchases.

On September 20 the diary tells us that the weather has been favourable for both hay and corn harvests; and then we come to the entry of October 13, 1801, when 'Big Tom' of Lincoln has been rung to celebrate the commencement of the negotiations which resulted in the Peace of Amiens. The following day the diary is taken out for the last time, and a few maxims, hardly decipherable on account of the faint trembling handwriting, are inscribed in it:

Honour on Earth cannot make a Man Happy.

A sound Hearte all tryals will abide.

Neither too Silent be nor Talk too Free.
Lay Wholly aside ill Nature and Pride.

Confine your Tongue least it Confine you.

Remember Time will come, when we must give
Account to God how we on Earth do live.

From the church registers I gathered that the last of the Meltons, faithful to his diary until the end, was laid to rest in the Lincolnshire churchyard among the wolds on October 21, 1801. Four years later, on the same day of October, his hero, Horatio Nelson, fell at the battle of Trafalgar.

W. M. DUNNING.

Not among the Immortals.

THEY were not of Californian growth, but squatters, for they had left the Old Country to make a sick man well, and the hope in which they had set forth seemed amply fulfilling itself. For sociability's sake they had tried city life in San Francisco, but the intolerable dust had driven them further inland to a great solitude where they had no hired help and had to do everything for themselves.

This enforced action in such a climate was as the elixir of life to John Raymond, whose consumptive aspect when leaving England had caused his friends to wish him good-bye with a painfully forced cheerfulness which had tried to hide a sad certainty of never seeing him again. But California had done wonders for him. He was able to groom two horses, milk one cow, and do all the hewing of wood and drawing of water without incurring more than healthy fatigue, which induced good appetite and sound sleep.

But the life was dull and remote, as healthy, useful lives so often are. On very still evenings they could hear the horn of the San Francisco mail-coach blaring faintly in the distance; the nearest post-office was five good miles off, and no neighbour worth cultivating, in a social sense, could be reached under ten.

So they were thrown almost entirely upon their own resources, and so far these resources had not failed them, although they had sometimes to make believe, just as children do, to lighten monotonous hours with laughter. One day it occurred to Raymond that he and his wife might dignify their homely tasks by a more classical nomenclature, and, like Adam, he began with the animals.

'There is so much in a name,' he said, with his laughing eyes on his wife, as she kneaded bread with an energy which gave her back some lost colour, 'we will veil ourselves and our pursuits under grander titles. The two steeds shall become Castor and Pollux, the dog Cerberus, and the cow Boanerges, for although she

is only a cow, and behaves like a cow, her voice is as the voice of Boanerges—son of thunder.'

'There may be something in your idea,' replied Madge Raymond critically. 'Already I feel translated above the commonplace, but as one of the horses is mine I should like to call it Pegasus.'

'Certainly not; the name of Pegasus is already appropriated by my soaring genius, which, in vulgar language, keeps the pot boiling.'

He tapped his manuscript with the feather of his pen before rising quickly to lift the pan of dough, which appeared to task his wife's strength.

'My dear child, I thought it was a ton weight, but it is quite light.'

'I know,' she answered hurriedly, 'but it is a limp sort of day, and it is an emotional thing to be suddenly translated among the Immortals. I had better sit down to hear what is in store for me. What am I to be called?'

'I have thought of such a pretty name for you—one not unlike your own. I shall call you Maia when you are good, and Discordia when you are cross. As for me, I am, of course, Adonis—"all short," as the French say.'

He announced it with a roguish conceit; he was so happy in renewed hope and returning health that there was zest in the homeliest wit, but it might have been that the spirit in which she entered the jest was a little forced.

'Adonis, possibly, when you are properly shaven and shorn; otherwise I shall address you as Polyphemus.'

'Aha! And pray where did my little ignoramus learn anything about the classical tragedy of *Acis and Galatea*?'

'We used to sing it,' she answered dreamily. 'Behold the monster Polypheme! I was always so fond of part-singing. John, we have a visitor!'

'Then it will probably be Mercury come formally to enroll us. How very prompt the gods are!' But as he observed the very substantial human figure which was tying up a horse to the hitching-post, he shook his head. 'I am wrong; Mrs. Mackay is a very good sort, but too solidly constructed for any sort of aerial messenger. Come along, and let us announce ourselves with due ceremony.'

They went out into the hot, intensely clear air with a warm welcome for Mrs. Mackay of the ample proportions and the shrewd, kindly eyes. Her husband owned a prosperous ranch many miles

away, but neighbourly kindness made light of the distance, and it was a pleasure to Mrs. Mackay to mother the younger and less experienced couple and help them when she could.

True to his word, Raymond introduced his wife as Maia, himself as Adonis, and rattled off the new titles of the domestic establishment down to the very dog.

'My patience!' ejaculated the slow Scotchwoman, taking her leisurely place on the verandah; 'my patience! And is the mon gone clean daft?'

'I do not think so,' said his wife. 'He is perhaps a little above himself because he is getting so strong and so well.'

All the tiredness of face and voice vanished, for this recovery was her exceeding reward for exile and attacks of homesickness which depressed her so greatly when Raymond was enjoying his literary labours, and escaping by their means from the monotony of every day.

'I can see he's lost his cough and does not get colded. It's a verra fine dry air here, and not variable.'

To this Madge Raymond agreed heartily, without saying how wearying she found the long, hot, bright days, or how often she sighed for the wet west wind, with its refreshing touch, which had enhanced her girlish roses and made the Irish garden blossom the whole year round. But she never spoke of this longing for her native land; she chided herself concerning it, having so much to be thankful for; yet the distant mountains seemed to draw nearer day by day and shut her in more inexorably, so that she felt restless, as prisoners do.

But Raymond could escape. After the healthy labours of early morning he could sit at his desk and find inspiration from those very mountains that prisoned his wife in, or he could pass them boldly to wander far and wide in the pleasant realms of imagination. No wonder, then, that his were the high spirits and his the merry heart which could go all the way.

'Now, Mrs. Mackay, I am going to hitch out your horse while Madge gets the nectar and ambrosia ready, for to-day you feast with the gods!'

He was gone, his body active and his eyes alight with laughter; while Mrs. Mackay ejaculated 'My patience!' for the second time, and turned her shrewd eyes upon the one who was obviously less hilarious, although she tried not to show it.

'The place has done wonders for him,' she said decidedly; 'he's no the same mon that came with his banes almost to be

counted, and he is as full of nonsense as a colt unbroken. But I am no so satisfied with you ; it will be your banes we shall be counting next. What ails ye ?'

Mrs. Raymond's weary, blue eyes sought those mountains which were slowly becoming an offence to her. It seemed ridiculous, as well as wickedly ungrateful, to say that the place which had brought health to her husband was becoming well-nigh unbearable to her through its loneliness, and that to put her longing for home into words would be to break down and weep passionately.

'I suppose it is the dry heat, but I feel so sapless, and the things seem getting so heavy to lift and move about. I shall have more energy when the rains come.'

'Ah ! And I take it you've never had to do all in a hoose until ye came here ?'

With a gesture she indicated the thousand-and-one things which demand the attention of the housewife who is single-handed and with no feminine help at hand.

'No ; you see there were many of us at home, and I am afraid I was always what Mr. Mackay calls a "daidlebones." But John is very good ; he helps me all he possibly can.'

Mrs. Mackay was very glad to hear this, for she had a notion that any man who made a livelihood through the easy means of literature might be too sunk in sloth to take his part diligently enough in household affairs. She remembered how her severely practical husband had considered no homely task beneath his masculine dignity when they had been young beginners, and before prosperity and growing children had lightened the burden of living.

'There is much,' she observed cautiously, 'that a mon's no guid at all for—not that he will ever own it—and I am thinking maybe—'

'You are not to think anything. I am well—quite well, only lazy.'

She spoke as though to close the subject before her husband came within hearing distance. She roused herself to be very merry as they broke bread together, but Mrs. Mackay managed to have a quiet word with Raymond as he walked by the side of her buggy to open the gate for her.

'Mr. Raymond, I am not fancying that your wife is quite in her usual ?'

'Madge ! Why, she is as well as possible ; always busy—as busy as you are yourself.'

'She is busy enough—she's bound to be that; but she's gone thin, and she is low in herself.'

'Low in herself?' he repeated, almost smiling at the mental picture of Madge entering so gleefully into his little joke of the morning. He would quite have smiled but for the solicitousness on Mrs. Mackay's face, for certainly she was the last woman in the world to have causeless fears.

'You see, Mr. Raymond, the climate has just been the saving of you, but it's none so guid for all. I'm thinking your meat is her poison, and whiles she's very lonely.'

'Lonely—with me?'

'A mon's not everything, although he thinks he is,' replied Mrs. Mackay, with unshaken philosophy. 'As a lassie she was one of many—all sorts coming and going to the hoose. It must be daithly still to her sometimes when you are at your writings'—a faint note of contempt here—'and she wi' folded hands after the labours of the day.'

She had more to say and to suggest, for she was eminently a practical Christian; but Raymond was only a little disturbed in mind as he went back and called his wife by her new name. Yes, she was certainly a little thin. But did not everybody get thin in the hot season? She was paler, too; but that was natural enough after the grave anxiety and suspense of his serious illness, for she had had everything on her shoulders—the breaking up of their home, the coming abroad on such a slender thread of hope, until returning health had enabled him to take his share of the burden once more. Without doubt she was a little run down, and he would take Mrs. Mackay's sensible advice concerning her.

'Maia, Mrs. Mackay and I are not quite satisfied with your looks. You are to be despatched to-morrow per coach to consult a learned Æsculapius, who is also known as Dr. Kinson of San Francisco. Do you hear?'

'It is not in the least necessary,' she answered quickly. 'I am as right as possible. It will only be a waste of time and money.'

'Oho! So it is Discordia who answers me—Discordia, or one of the Furies. Never mind, you have all got to do precisely as I say; and mind you bring me back a faithful report.'

Now, partly by reason of his easy-going temperament, and because she had naturally taken the lead during his illness, she could usually have her own way in things. She thought it so ridiculous to go to a doctor because her heart ached with homesickness. But in this instance he carried his point, and early the

next morning they rode together to the nearest place for intercepting the Francisco mail. It was so early that the shadows were still long, and as they waited by the track, she still in the saddle, she called her husband to her and kissed him wistfully.

'How big, and brown, and wonderful you look! And what a silly journey I am taking all for nothing.'

'We must agree to differ upon that point; and mind you bring me back a faithful report of all that the learned Æsculapius tells you.'

He said this for the second time, without a thought that the doctor would tell her anything which could disturb their peace of mind. No trouble shadowed him the day through, only he missed her terribly, so that the devotion of Cerberus and the milking of Boanerges were welcome to him. He told them both that the beloved mistress would be back no later than the very next day. Then, because of his loneliness, he went early to bed, but was up betimes in order to astonish Madge with the extent of his preparations to welcome her home. He put literary work entirely on one side in order to sweep and garnish; he groomed Castor and Pollux until they shone resplendent, and he doomed Cerberus to a wash, which the animal hated only second to a whipping. Mysterious indeed were the arts and crafts engaged upon by Raymond; but he was at the trysting-place strictly before time; and again the shadows were long, for now it was evening. He could hardly see Madge for packages as the coach left her behind, but when he had disentangled her a little, and decked the patient, accustomed horses with her purchases, he could see that the hot, dusty journey had tired her very considerably.

But her manner was very bright as she answered his questions, especially when he demanded the opinion of the learned Æsculapius upon her case.

'He did not waste many words upon me; probably he thought me not worth while, but he gave me this,' and she patted a corpulent packet which might easily have contained a quart bottle dressed for a journey. 'It is—let me see—choicest Falernian, so strong that one teaspoonful in water suffices. I am afraid the gods were too prone to having it neat.'

'Stupid child!' he cried gaily. 'I knew you would be making a hash of things. The gods did not condescend to drink Falernian brewed by mortal hands. Then that hideous bottle is the worst of it, and there is nothing organically wrong?'

'Nothing; it is just meagrimis—isn't that a funny word?'

I think he said meagrim, and that the heat had tried me. Why, we could have told him that without the expense of the journey.'

'Possibly; but we might not have compounded a demijohn of restorative on quite the right lines. Well, I am glad you went, and I am delighted to have you back again; it has seemed an age.'

He certainly did most of the talking during their ride home, for it was the first time in two years that she had been away so long; and when they off-saddled before turning the horses loose in the paddock she was greeted by the amazing sight of the meek Boanerges of the thunderous voice, all garlanded with a wreath of ruddy leaves.

'I was afraid she would rub it off,' said Raymond, 'although I told her it was to keep the flies off. Evidently she believed me. The proper symbol would have been a garlanded bull, but I had not one in stock.'

She had hardly time to laugh with him over the gay conceits of his welcome before Cerberus rushed out upon her, his yellow fleece golden and curly, from his bath, and thankfulness in his heart that, with his mistress returned to protect him, he might never again be washed with such dreadful thoroughness. Inside the house a scheme of fanciful decoration was carried out by means of a lively invention. Even that extinct volcano, the cooking-stove, which had glowed fiercely through the morning, had its sheer ugliness hidden by luxuriant vegetation. Two stuffed squirrels had vine leaves bound about their brows, and Raymond introduced them as Bacchus and one Bacchante.

'For we are going to feast,' he told her. 'That good Mrs. Mackay sent a fat cooked capon and a bottle of home-brewed Californian wine by Harrison's outrider, so we shall shortly resemble the nobleman who became exceedingly dissipated on seed-cake. I've been cooking, too. I made biscuit, only I am afraid it isn't quite like yours.'

It certainly was not, but she ate it—a little, for love and appreciation. They drank a modest quantity of the wine, which Bacchus would certainly not have touched, and then Raymond insisted upon clearing away while Madge changed her habit for a muslin wrapper. They had nothing to do then but enjoy the rest and quiet, so they sat out on the verandah, and Raymond smoked a pipe of very perfect satisfaction. A few large, bright stars shone through velvety darkness, but there was no moon, and Raymond drew his chair nearer his wife's.

'I want to touch you,' he said; 'you look so ghostlike and unreal in that white wrapper.'

She leant caressingly against him, and Cerberus lay at her feet, a supremely happy dog.

'I wonder if we have done rashly by meddling with the immortals; perhaps they don't like it? I hope Maia was all that she ought to have been?'

'Naturally I was very careful about that. She was so good that she was translated into a star.'

Madge looked at the few large, bright stars trembling in space, and shivered a little.

'I am not sure that I appreciate such lofty promotion. They look very lonely and far off.'

'Greatness must always be solitary,' he answered didactically; 'but Maia, as one of the Pleiades, could not possibly be lonely, could she?'

'I do not know; one can be terribly lonely in a crowd. But, speaking about greatness, how are you getting on with your "writings," as Mrs. Mackay calls it?'

'With such contempt, too, doesn't she?—bless her good heart! My dear Madge—or rather Maia—I feel absolutely stuffed with brilliant ideas. In the near future I hope to write myself down with indelible ink upon the scroll of literary fame. Then, like the man who had dined, fate will have no power to harm me.'

'Yes,' she cried eagerly, 'that is just it; you will always have a resource—an oasis—into which you can escape when—when there is trouble here in the real world. I've often thought it must be wonderful to have kings and queens at your beck and call, or be able to summon monsters from the vasty deep; in vulgar parlance, you need not stick at a trifle, need you? And you can be as fond of your villain as though he were the best—as he is the cleverest—of men; and unless you wish, your people need never grow old or ill. Without being a god, you can endow them with immortal youth and make them happy: you are always to do that—to make them happy. I can't bear to cry over a book.'

The little speech was quite brightly said, but it is well known that the blind are acute listeners; and Raymond, blinded by the velvety darkness so sparsely lit by stars, caught a very unusual note in his wife's voice. On the instant he struck a match, and it was done so quickly that she had not time to avert her face, down which the tears were running fast.

'*Madge!*'

'It's the meagrimis, John ; nothing but that. It's just the way meagrimis show themselves ; you cry for nothing and about nothing.'

'You are not that sort of woman,' he answered, with the sudden pinch of fear gripping his heart ; 'you are hiding something from me. I shall write to your doctor.'

'No, really !' she cried more eagerly than ever ; for, after all, it was more the doctor's grave manner than his actual words which had alarmed her. 'It is as I say. At least let me consume the contents of the demijohn before doing anything rash. No meagrimis could live unharmed by so fiery a potion.'

But although she was hilariously merry for the rest of the evening and the next day, he wrote his letter and posted it himself ; moreover, he could see now the effort she had to use even about light tasks, and noticing this with increasing anxiety, he was surprised when on mail day she expressed a wish to ride in for the letters. This healthy symptom of renewed energy pleased him and he eyed the demijohn approvingly, feeling that the contents of the plethoric bottle were doing Madge good.

She rode fast, as do those who feel and hear the pursuing hoof-beats of fate. Her heart throbbed unevenly as she sorted the mail into her saddlebags and saw the educated handwriting in which one letter to her husband was addressed. She rode slowly away from the little settlement grouped round the post-office, and more slowly still when she had reached the solitary track, grass-bordered and serene, which was her homeward way. It was such large, fine scenery, with something to her oppressive in the very beauty which she could see without feeling the joy of it. To her it was solemn, awe-inspiring, and the splendid, deep, dark shadows on the mountain side suggested chasms unfathomable and full of gloom ; they were so distant, and yet they seemed to draw nearer every day, and the shadows became deeper.

It was all so different from the smiling Irish valley of her childhood and youth, where old and young had known and made her welcome—where she had been one among a merry, irresponsible group of brothers, and sisters, and friends. She had gone a-hunting on a sorry beast, and danced the night through in a home-made ball-dress ; but nobody had minded, for they had all been poor and happy together. And her marriage had been almost ideal in its perfect agreement. The shadow had been cast, but it had lifted again—only it meant an exile in which her husband thrived and flourished while she drooped like a sapless plant.

If he knew this in its entirety—but he was not to know it, and, slipping from her horse, she let it graze by the wayside, while she sat near to open and read the fateful letter. She was unprincipled enough to do this, although, as a rule, they were scrupulously courteous about each other's correspondence. As she had expected, the written words were plainer than had been the doctor's spoken ones to her; yet in more guarded language he had said precisely the same thing. No organic disease as yet, but a lowering of all the vital forces that might lead to any complication. Like many perfectly healthy plants, she could live and thrive in places, but not in all; and the remedy was simple, the cure, humanly speaking, assured if she would go back to her native land—back to those wet west winds, which would renew her bloom and give back her old strength. The isolation of her surroundings, so the doctor said, had its peculiar depression for a woman of her temperament, and robbed her of the power of recuperation. It was a short letter, but much to the point, especially the last sentence:

'I tried not to alarm Mrs. Raymond unnecessarily, and when I told her how imperative it was that she should go home she declared that it was not possible for her to do so. I tell you frankly that it must be possible if you wish to keep her with you.'

She tore the letter across, but guarded the pieces jealously lest one should flutter away to bear any sort of witness. A simple remedy and a perfect cure! Yes; it might be so. She felt it would be so by the leap her heart made across those prisoning mountains, for there lay the way home; but the cure might be at a price she dared not contemplate, for Raymond would not let her go alone, neither could he be left by himself. They had been there two years, and he had grown big, and brown, and strong. If she could hold out just another year perhaps—— She looked up startled, for horses' feet move softly over grass, and she had barely time to secrete the hand holding the torn pieces in the folds of her riding-skirt before Raymond was at her side. He looked at the rifled saddlebag, and then searchingly at her.

'If ever I saw a guilty woman! Madge, you have been looting.'

His light manner belied his anxious face; and, sitting down by her, he brought the hidden hand into the light.

'No, John, no; it is private—*marked* private.'

'I see it is, and addressed to me. I had my suspicions half an hour after you left, so I followed you.'

He put the broken pieces together and read the letter atten-

tively, and she saw what a shock it was to him, although he did not speak in the least tragically.

'God bless that dear woman Mrs. Mackay; she has done us a good turn. And now, Madge, we've just got to make straight tracks for home—for dear old Oireland.'

'No,' she said decidedly; 'we are going to stay here. A person who can't get strong in a splendid air like this has no right to live. I have given way and moped sometimes when you were not looking; now I promise you that I will laugh and grow fat—I will indeed.'

She meant to have the last word, for hitherto she had always had it. Never before had he been able to resist that tender pleading of hers, backed up by those loving blue eyes. He kissed her, and he still spoke lightly, but with unmistakable determination underneath the lightness.

'Look here, little girl! You have had it your own way so long that you do not know what a terrible person I can be when I choose. You did a brave thing when you came so many thousands of miles with such a sick man on such slender means. You were the whole crew of the *Nancy* brig, and splendidly you worked everything; but now I take command for a while, and my orders are that we go home.'

'I won't go!' she cried, as fiercely as her choked voice would let her. 'Think what it means, your leaving here!'

'Why, it means that we shall both be healthy and happy, provided we build our nest on fairly high ground and keep the windows well open. Now I am going to prove to you that two heads are better than one, and that as a dutiful little wife you ought to have told me everything, and not been so shamefully scheming. You have not realised that I am a cured man, so whole and sound that it matters very little where I go. My lungs are as sound as yours—perhaps I ought to say sounder. My dear little sacrificial victim, there really is no monster for you to throw yourself to.'

This dazzling solution of a life-and-death problem had never occurred to her; she had thought his tenure of existence solely dependent upon the air they were breathing. But if it were not so, and he was really, as he declared himself, a cured man, they had both of them little or nothing to regret. Given health and strength, he could do better financially at home than abroad; and, torn between hope and fear, she looked at him to try to discover if he were right in what he asserted so confidently.

'Oh, I mean it. I haven't meagrima, you know. Look here!

Did you ever see such a great, brown, muscular paw on a consumptive man? Beside yours it looks the sort of thing that might have belonged to a prehistoric giant.'

Perhaps because seeing is believing, she could no longer doubt the robust evidence before her eyes; so, suddenly elated with hope, she could even attempt excuses for herself.

'He certainly mentioned meagrimms. I chose the shortest word to bring back with me, for the others were too long. And, John, if you are right about yourself, as I believe you are, we will have nothing further to do with the Immortals. I won't be Maia even in imagination, and you could not be any sort of Adonis if you tried—very far from it, I am glad and happy to say.'

ELLEN ADA SMITH.

The South-west Wind.

THE sun sank into a crimson haze that enveloped the mountains of the west, and before the last flush had died away into the grey of the valley a thin strip of a moon appeared in the pale blue sky. The heavens became a deeper blue, brighter grew the moon and stars, slowly the mists of evening were gathered up, and the mountain-tops cut clean and hard against the sky. A hedge-sparrow uttered one thin piping note, then, in a silence which was absolute and profound, the earth entered into the kingdom of night.

Fields and woods, moors and mountains were gripped in the iron hand of winter. If, during the long monotonous days, we heard the plaintive cry of the fieldfare or the forlorn 'chirrup' of the skylark as they fluttered over the barren, snow-clad fields, at night we only felt that, from the still white earth, there arose a silent cry of suffering unallayed, that the hushed sob of the starving was there unheard. Many a bird was nursing the last flickerings of life, and many a little group of cold puffs of lifeless feathers were huddled together among the ivy-leaves—the ivy-leaves that, as Richard Jefferies said, used always to be placed on the coffins of paupers. The pale moonlight that shone between the boles of the forest trees, the frosty rime that bejewelled every bough and twig, the solemnity of the distant snow-clad hills, and the stillness that prevailed over all, inspired a feeling of deepest reverence: below, the earth glittered with the diamonds of the frost; above, the heavens were bespangled with the glory of the stars. Yet the awe-inspiring silence was the silence of a death-chamber, and while, under the cold clutch of her icy fingers, Nature's wildlings cowered and lay still, one of the scenes in the great drama of her year was being unfolded.

Every day the sun shone brightly, and the countless diamonds of the frost glittered in a fairy-land of purest white. The irregular lines of hedgerows, the stone walls on the hillsides, lay hard and

black between the smooth unspotted fields, and the silence of the snow brooded over the earth. With puffed-out plumage the blackbirds sat on the bare twigs which a week ago had yielded the last scarlet berry, and now and then the distressful note of some starving redwing would come from the pastures where the turf lay deep under winter's impenetrable mantle. Even the stream no longer rippled merrily, and underneath the blue-grey ice the silvery bubbles rotated in the gurgling water. And there, where the frozen fern-fronds and icicles cling together in columns and arches of exquisite beauty, there lies a little 'drift of feathers'—a jewel of turquoise and sapphire, coral and ruby. For a week the patient kingfisher had waited in the alder branches for the gates of ice to be unlocked; but one night its tiny body fell softly from its perch. By the roadside, too, many a robin and finch lay dead, and scarcely heavier than the feathers that covered their emaciated frames.

Nature thins out the wildlings of the woods and fields with a pruning-knife that knows no mercy. The sickly, the aged, the weak, the unfit, are relentlessly slain in the struggle for existence that reaches its greatest severity in times of hardship, and

The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can,

is never enforced to such an extremity as during the last severe frost of winter. The struggles of the living and the sufferings of the dying are essential parts of that world of snow and ice. That wonderful white world of silence is a world of hunger and lingering death wherein Nature lays heavy toll upon the lives of the very beings she has created; against the citadel of her own making she presses a besieging hand that knows no compassion, and the weak and tender, the crippled and the aged cry out for mercy, but are not heard. It is a loveless world—a world that fights for self, and when the time comes to lighten the over-burdened ship the women and children are the first to be cast into the sea, and the strong men save themselves.

Those delicate crystals of prismatic hues that flash in the light of day, or rival the stars of night, are weapons whose power is seldom realised. They slay the winter gnat, and grind down the loftiest mountains of the world. Races of mankind, yea, all the living beings of continents, have retreated before their silent forces; and to-day, in these woods and fields, the soft snow that sinks

beneath our footsteps with a muffled crunch is playing its part on the stage of Nature—a part that, for the moment, we think hard, cruel, and pitiless.

But in our superficial knowledge of the earth we are often apt to overlook the wisdom of that stern law 'The fit only shall survive,' and the health and strength, beauty and happiness, which it ultimately brings forth. We sometimes forget that, underneath the snow, Nature is silently gathering together other forces that will one day burst forth into the joyousness of spring and the glory of summer, that the white mantle of winter protects the early flowers that lie just under the surface of the earth,

Where they together,
All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, keep house unknown,

and that its melting crystals will one day run in streams of living water through the frozen veins of the earth. Out of enmity and strife there will grow love and peace—out of the cold, dead night of winter will shine the dawn of a life renewed.

'Tis the sweetest thing to remember,
If courage be on the wane,
When the cold, dark days are over,
Why the birds go north again!

But it is only those who have followed Nature through times of trial and stress, those who have seen and felt the famine of the snows, seen the newborn lambs shivering in some deep glen where the shadows of night are still unpierced by the struggling shreds of dawn—only those who have witnessed the tragedy of Nature and learned her purpose, who can really feel the throb of spring, the coming of the Season of Love.

To many of us nothing becomes more monotonous than a prolonged frost, when the country, as far as the eye can see, lies under a deep mantle of snow. For a time we delight in the crispness of the air, the brightness of the noonday sun, and the wonderful effects of light upon the crystals that cover the earth and cling to every bough and twig. We anxiously watch the ogling, blinking sun slowly rise through the cold grey mists of morning, and in the evening see it sink into the flaming vapours of the west.

But yesterday was so like to-day, to-morrow will be just like to-day. The same sad silence brooding over the landscape of untouched snow, the dark fir-trees that stand, grim and immovable,

patiently bearing their burden of whiteness, the ghostly quietude of the moonlit woods, the silent suffering, all tend to oppress the mind, and one longs for change.

One evening, after many weeks of weary waiting, there were signs of an impending change. Across the glowing west, which quickly faded to a pale flame yellow, a flock of wild ducks were flying in V-shaped formation, and, like fragments blown off the silvery breakers of a summer sea, a party of gulls drifted inland, gliding over the oak woods. Instead of going to roost in silence, the rooks clamoured vociferously and swirled about the sky in fantastic evolutions long after the twilight had passed into night.

The following morning the sun loomed large and red in the east, and as it rose it scattered a dark cloud into crimson fragments far up into the pale green sky. Then the white mountain-tops on the opposite horizon cut hard and sharp into a clear blue. Whiter than the whitest marble, whiter than any dream of whiteness, purer than the sun-bathed summer cloud, the spotless snow peaks intensified the azure. A grey mist, which lay in the far-off valley, now crept up the gorges, which chiselled in irregular lines the lower hills, and changed to violet. As the sun rose higher the whiteness of the summits underwent a transformation. First the peaks, then the rounded shoulders, were tinted with the most delicate rose-pink. The colour sped from one eminence to another, until the whole stretch of hills was flushed with a wild-rose hue. Soon the azure became a steel grey, the pink gradually vanished, and the snow looked dull and leaden. On the highest summit a thin white cloud was gathering. Slowly, like a wreath of swansdown, it was drawn, as if by some invisible hand, over the darkened snow. As it moved onwards it became greyer in its denser parts, and so closely did it hug the surface that it finally clung to each rugged peak and cushioned shoulder like a fleece.

Suddenly a succession of heavy thuds awakens the quietude of the woods. The Scotch firs, that have borne their burden of snow for so long, have at last dropped their load, and the branches, relieved from bondage, sway and jostle each other. Now there is 'a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees,' and a shower of brown oak-leaves rattles through the hedgerow. The long arms of the beeches move restlessly, and chafe against one another, and the ivy on an old stump rustles tremulously. Then a soft puff of warm air sweeps past, making the undergrowth sway and flutter and the forest trees moan in the distance. The dead leaves of sycamore and chestnut, that have been curled and

crisped with the frost, now lie flat and limp on the soft earth beneath the holly-trees. The snow has lost its glitter, and is sinking to the earth, disclosing the unevenness of the pastures and the shapes of the mole-hills that are underneath it.

The cloud on the mountains was now being torn into ragged shreds which stretched high up into the sky, while its lower parts were being reinforced with billowy waves of grey. Then a fine film of blue rain began to drift slowly down towards the lowlands, and the warm, moist wind increased in force.

Now, in sweeping columns, like pillars of smoke, the water-carriers are being borne on the wings of the South-west Wind, and with banners of rainbows and the merry music of gushing streams, are driving down the valleys. On the hills, in the shady dells, everywhere, the frost is coming out of the ground 'like a dormant quadruped from his burrow,' breaking up the hard earth into finest particles, running in streams of water to feed the roots of the firstlings of spring, quickening into life the pulse of the earth. The ice that yesterday held the rivers and lakes in its iron grip sinks and cracks with muffled sounds, and the icicles fall and splinter like broken glass upon the rocks. The warm hand of the spring, that draws the delicate grass-blade from the earth, the snowdrop from its sheath, has triumphed over the mailed fist of winter. The snow that held the earth in silent awe, that spread hunger and death upon field and woodland, and appeared so irresistible and merciless in its cold attack upon every living thing, now melts and vanishes before the soft breath of the South-west Wind, and 'the laugh of the mountains' can be heard in a hundred brooks. In glistening beads the water gathers to the heart of the trefoil leaf of the clover, and the close-cropped grass by the rabbit-burrows shows through the thin wet snow a vivid green. A refreshing scent of new earth emanates from the pastures, and evanescent rainbows glow against the russet woods as the misty rays of sunshine speed past. In the distant landscape the wet roofs of the farmhouses flash like mirrors in the pale light; the mole, in his underground home, feeling the heart-beat of the earth, pushes up the dark brown soil through the sinking snow, and there green plovers anxiously wait, with their heads to the wind, for the up-turned worm. High up in the air a flock of fieldfares dash past with a swishing sound of wings. Far away in their Norwegian home the spring is calling them, and they hurry on with a swift, strong flight. The wagtails are back again on the garden lawns, and the woodpecker greets the spring with a succession of laughing

notes. The chaffinches are no longer collected in large flocks, but on the sodden pathway dainty couples of crimson-breasted males are strutting along with perky wives in tints of olive and grey. Along the hedgerows, where the first green grass has appeared, a sleek blackbird, with golden-orange bill, jealously keeps one eye on a tawny, modest female, while with the other he watches a rival among the branches. Two sparrows are quarrelling for the possession of a dowdy little hen sparrow, who is pretending indifference as to the outcome of the fight; and already the love-songs of thrushes and larks are heard in woods and meadows. Thus, no sooner has the South-west Wind

Filled the sky with haze and vapour,
Filled the air with dreamy softness,

than it breathes into living creatures the burning strife of Love. Now the songs of birds are the battle cries in that other struggle that goes on in the realm of love-making, where there is also rivalry, selfishness, bitterness, and envy, as there was in the days of winter suffering. But how different the motives! Yesterday, in the silent snowfields, the cry was 'Self'; to-day, in the kiss of the South-west Wind, it is 'Another.' Selfishness has given way to self-sacrifice; hatred has melted in the breath of Love.

A. T. JOHNSON.

At the Sign of the Ship.

‘THE world is so full of a number of things’ that have not been found out, yet *can* be found out, as to make us all ‘as happy as kings’ if we are only curious enough. One of the things not found out is, ‘What did the men see to run mad about in Mary Queen of Scots?’ To solve this riddle great exhibitions of her portraits have been held at intervals ever since 1856. When I was a boy, one of these exhibitions must have been open somewhere, for lines on the subject appeared in *Punch*. My mind at that time was ‘wax to receive and marble to retain’ anything of interest that had no connection with school-books. The verses ran thus—there were more, but the following are enough for the present purpose :

O Mary Queen of Scots, you’re a sphinx, a myth, a mystery!
Chameleon, who shall tell us what you looked like, what you were?
Will-o’-the-wisps about you are the lights of British history:
Conventicle says one thing, and another thing, Consistory;
Till, ‘twixt Lingard’s Romish glosses and Froude’s attacks so blistery,
You seem half fiend of darkness, half angel pure and fair.

* * *

When did Mr. Froude begin to work his will on Mary?—for that date would yield the approximate date of the poem. The singer went on :

I really feel as puzzled as a ‘possum up a hollow tree,
With a fire-stick at bottom and a tomahawk at top,
To see these various images set up for Mariolatry,
To members of the female sex in one respect consolatory,
By proving that no woman is too ugly for idolatry,
For of grimmer, ghastlier faces I never saw a crop.

* * *

If anyone will look at a set of photographs of the portraits shown at these Marian exhibitions, he will agree with the puzzled

poet. Setting aside the certainly apocryphal things—fancy pictures, or pictures of other ladies wrongly styled Mary—he will find a collection of beaky hags and solemn or sulky schoolgirls, with good features but entirely without charm, witchery, the sorcery of the Queen; or, lastly, he will find ladies with fat, flat faces and double chins. The last are correct enough as portraits of Mary after her fortieth birthday. The only two portraits in oils—one of Mary at about eighteen, the other at about thirty-six—which explain her undeniable sorcery, are more than doubted by experts, though I believe in both.

* * *

This is an unnatural state of things. Friends and enemies who saw 'the Flower of fair Scotland' are unanimous about her beauty and charm in her youth. A princess so much admired at the French Court must often have been painted and drawn. Stiff and hard as was the French art of the period, every artist can scarcely have failed with such a model, and all the successes cannot have perished, leaving plenty of the failures. The puzzle is to find a case of success. Now, if I do find one, specialists will discredit it—because 'it is their nature to'—on evidence of style or of costume. But I think I have discovered a splendid success that 'winna ding, and douna be disputed.' As far as I am aware it has never been publicly exhibited.

* * *

This piece is a miniature in the collection of the Duke of Portland at Welbeck Abbey. The Duke, in the female line, descends from the famous 'Bess of Hardwick,' the Countess of Shrewsbury, wife of the Earl of Shrewsbury who for so long was Mary's gaoler. Sometimes the Countess and the captive Queen were on terms of friendly gossip, and in one of these moments Mary may have given the miniature of herself, as a girl, to Bess. However this may be, it is a surprising work of art. Mr. Whistler might have painted it had he been a miniaturist in 1560. It is veritably 'a symphony in white.' The pretty young lady is attired in all shades of milk and cream and ivory, in lawn, and white silk, pearls, and ermine—royal ermine. She wears a thing like a gigantic coal-scuttle bonnet, perhaps as a sunshade in torrid weather; but even this clumsy covering is 'turned to favour and to prettiness.' The curious, by looking up 'Mary Queen of Scots' in the index of Dr. Williamson's *History of Portrait Miniature*,¹ will find their way to an excellent

¹ Bell, London, 1904.

photograph of the portrait of this Queen of a summer Castle of Indolence. On the back, in the hand of Edward, Earl of Oxford (Harley), is written 'Mary Q. of Scots.' That is no proof of identity; but Oxford was a man of taste and learning. Dr. Williamson (vol. i. p. 44) writes, on the other hand: 'The beautiful miniature' (Plate X. fig. 3) 'probably does not represent Mary Queen of Scots at all, but a French princess. . . . It is certainly a sixteenth-century portrait.'

* * *

I know of no French princess of the Valois Court who resembled the miniature. The eyes in the photograph look quite as dark as Mary's hazel eyes. But my point is this—above the head are written the words *Virtutis Amore*, and, to attest the virtue of the subject, she holds in her hand a little book of devotion, though she looks *une élégante, une mondaine*, of the first flight.

* * *

Perhaps the reader has already discovered my discovery? Why is the piece inscribed *Virtutis Amore*? What do the words mean in Latin? I think there is a tag of an hexameter about a man 'in love with virtue,' *virtutis captus amore*, but the two words alone, *Virtutis Amore*, seem odd. Now does the gentle reader see the point? VIRTUTIS AMORE—MARIE STOUART. The Latin words are an anagram of the Queen's name; *v*, for anagrammatic purposes, being equivalent to *v*. The *o* is got in thus—our sound 'oo,' as in 'coo,' is in French 'ou,' as in *couard*, *couardise*. The Scots pronunciation of 'Stewart' is still, in some districts, 'Stooart.' The French spelled our names phonetically (my name, *Lang*, is *Lain*, in the list of Scottish Archer Guards), and French has no *w*. Thus 'Stouart' for 'Stewart' was quite near enough for the purposes of the maker of the anagram *Virtutis Amore*, the book of devotion lending point to the words. 'Stouart,' in fact, is much nearer the actual name 'Stewart' than the French usually arrived. Who would take *le Sieur de Crequy* for *Beaton of Creich*?

* * *

I wonder if this is good enough for my friends the specialists in the history of portrait-painting? Probably it is not, and they will say that the anagram is a chance coincidence. If so, it is one of the most extraordinary in the history of flukes, and, as such, is well worth recording. But I think that my identification is sufficiently sound 'for congregational purposes' and general use.

Even if the eyes of the lady be grey (as I fear they are), they are very dark grey, or they could not come out so black in the photograph. So, till I am driven out of my anagram and my position, I dwell in the belief that we have in this miniature the record of a summer day at Fontainebleau, or in a castle on the Loire, and of a costume dear to the heart of the Queen; 'la neige de son beau visage effaçoit l'autre,' effaced the whiteness of her white mourning robes, says Brantôme.

* * *

Another objection will be made to the anagram. In *Virtutis Amore* there is a letter more than in 'Marie Stouart.' But that does not count. If the right letters are there and no wrong letters, the right letters which are superfluous 'go out,' are cancelled. This is certain, for on a silver bell of the Queen's, and on a bed embroidered by her, and described by Drummond of Hawthornden to Ben Jonson, the anagram is *Sa vertu m'attire*, with a device of the needle and the lodestone. Now, in *Sa vertu m'attire* there are fourteen letters; in 'Marie Stuart' there are only eleven. Another anagram of the Queen mentioned by Drummond is *Veritas Armata*. The device may not seem the most appropriate, but it yields the anagram 'Maria Stuart.' There are thirteen letters in *Veritas Armata*, against eleven in 'Maria Stuart'; but this is in accordance with the rules of the game as then played. We see that in all three anagrams *Veritas* or *Vertu* appears and makes itself useful. So my anagram, I think, is a safe thing.

* * *

Dr. Williamson also publishes another very taking miniature of Mary, not hitherto reproduced, but beyond all cavil genuine. She is again all in white, with a white toque and white plume set with pearls. This piece is in the Rijks Museum at Amsterdam; another, all in black, is at the Uffizi in Florence. The Queen in white is a white witch of charm, the Queen in black is rather a vulgar-looking girl. In all these remarks something must be discounted for my artless enthusiasm, and for the colour which, of course, is absent from the photographs of the miniatures.

* * *

The art of miniature seems to be lost. At the exhibition of the Royal Academy almost all the so-called miniatures are merely small drawings in water-colour, and scarcely one is of the minute proportions within which Hilliard and Oliver, Cooper and Plimer

and Humphreys, wrought their miracles of art. A miniature used to be a tiny personal thing, like a Greek gem; now it is a small portrait in water-colour, and the peculiar character of it is lost. It could be set in a jewel, or affectionately carried about in a little shagreen case, and its charm was the combination of breadth of handling with exiguity of surface. Very few modern miniaturists are true to these rules of the old art. The painters are women, as a rule, and often are amateurs.

* * *

Here is a tale of Indian jugglery. The trick described is new to me, and is given on the best authority, in a letter from India :

‘ March 15, 1905.

‘ I tell it as it was told to me the day after. Witnesses—Mr. S. S., Mrs. ditto, three English girls from fourteen to eleven, American dentist called Durand, and half a hundred villagers. Locale—a roadside in Saugor. S. S. says :

“ Yesterday we were all marching in from Khimlasa when we passed a village, and on the roadside a juggler was resting. We said to him, ‘ Juggle ! ’ and he did the finest trick I’ve ever seen, on the bare *maidan*. We stood within six feet of him, all round him, all the time, and he was half-naked. He took a rudely carved little boat, empty and undecked, about eight inches by four inches, with one thwart across it with a hole for a mast. We all examined this boat, and handed it round. It was empty. He then stuck a thin bamboo stick about two feet long in the hole, and then took a cocoanut and handed it round. This cocoanut was empty, with three holes in it. It was a small one, and we all saw and felt it was empty. He then stuck the nut on the bamboo, and stuck a little bamboo spout in one hole of the nut, and stood five yards off, and said, ‘ Spout ’ And it spouted water like one o’clock for a long time. He said, ‘ Stop,’ and it stopped; ‘ Spout,’ and it spouted. It spouted much more water than could ever have been in the nut or boat. When it stopped and the man was going, Durand said, ‘ You can’t get another drop out of it now.’ So the old man called for one of Mrs. S. S.’s breakfast cups, put it under the spout, went away as before, said, ‘ Spout,’ and it filled the cup over the brim. All the time the old man, who had a monkey’s skull with him, kept on saying, ‘ Bandar ka kopra ’ (‘ monkey’s skull ’) over and over again.”

'I asked them if the ground was wet with the overflow, and the S. S.'s said, "Yes," but one of the little girls, "No." Looks very fishy.'

* * *

Perhaps the expression 'looks very fishy' implies that the trick was produced by 'glamour'; that no water flowed, and that it was a case of 'suggestion.' But we have no proof that anyone can cast glamour over a number of strangers whom he has never hypnotised by any of the known processes. The monkey's skull occurs, as in a case of the rope trick, lately published in this part of the Magazine. It is a curious coincidence that, when the old haunted house of Alresford was pulled down, a skull, said to be a monkey's skull, was found under the flooring. This was the house where Mrs. Ricketts and her brother, the famous sailor, Lord St. Vincent, had such amazing experiences. Their evidence has often been published. Did some Indian or Anglo-Indian produce permanent illusions by aid of the juggler's monkey's skull, and how can the skull of a monkey be more efficacious in this way than the skull of a sheep or a dog? In *A Strange Story* Lytton used much more impressive material means of developing a haunted house. This yarn of the spout trick is the third case in which I have met a monkey's skull among the properties of an Indian juggler. It is to be wished that Anglo-Indian folklorists would look into the connection of the skull with the juggleries—the whole subject has been scamped by British observers.

* * *

Writing before the Royal Academy opens its doors to the public, one feels inclined to predict that Mr. Collier's picture *The Cheat* will be popular. It has all the elements of popularity. Two young men and two young women, all very 'smart,' are playing Bridge—I wish it had never been invented! One handsome scornful young woman is standing up; the other, red-haired and angry, is seated. The men look much as men do when lovely woman stoops to making a scene. As she is red-haired, the seated lady is probably the cheat. A pleasant scene, is it not—a picture that a man would like to have always before his eyes? People like talk and articles about ladies who cheat at Bridge.

* * *

I know not whether any do cheat, and cannot guess how it is done with bare arms. You cannot keep cards up your sleeve, and

even with sleeves the processes must be very difficult and perilous. Next, why do they cheat? A lady tells me that they probably begin in the mere furious desire of victory. St. Augustine tells us that this was his motive when, as a boy, he cheated at games—teeing his ball in a bunker, or taking analogous liberties. Then, finding that they succeed in an impromptu effort, they go on from love of lucre. All this sounds probable, if ladies ever do cheat, under pressure of debt, which one is unwilling to believe. That unhappy nobleman who, in the last century, had to be exposed in cheating at whist, after repeated warnings, took but a small percentage of gain by his vice. I think that he managed, when dealing, to turn up an ace. If he did that every time, attention could not but be unfavourably attracted to his good fortune. Probably he was not quite sane, and was in love with his own dexterity. There are points on which the fair is less scrupulous than the plain sex. It is not easy to make them understand why they should not smuggle, and few of them, indeed, refrain from smuggling Tauchnitz editions of popular books. They are stealing from authors who may be needy authors; but, say they, the books are much cheaper than English editions, and are of such a convenient size! Your neighbour's money is also convenient, very, if you can get it by cheating at cards. When you smuggle Tauchnitz novels you steal, just as much as when you stock the cards. You pocket a shilling or two of a British author every time; of a British publisher, too, you abstract a shilling. But this is not obvious to the fair smugglers, and when you explain they do not listen. Many a lady smuggles who would no more tip her ball into a better position at croquet than she would cut a throat or scuttle a ship. Some say that some men do not count their strokes correctly at golf, but this is mere arithmetical inefficiency, under a strong unconscious bias. You could not reckon on your caddy as an accomplice, if you cheated at golf. At cricket I do not see how you can cheat. Many a man throws up the ball when he thinks he has made a catch, but then he *does* think so; the ball coming half volley into the hands, close to the ground, makes a false impression. If a man is given 'not out,' in the case of a catch at the wicket, when he knows that the ball touched the bat, I suppose he must not dispute the umpire's verdict, and insist on going out, and the same in a case of leg before wicket. One has known a great Cambridge bat tell a great Oxford bowler, at luncheon, that he really was l.b.w. in the first over, though given not out. There seems to be no help for it; besides, the batsman is not the best judge in

cases of l.b.w. I remember a batswoman who admitted that she was out, but men are seldom so candid. Perhaps wicket-keeper is not always too conscientious in asking for a verdict, but he may not be sure, and asks for information. I once did cheat—it was irresistible—at a country game, not a *match*, I think. The umpire had said to his friend the batsman, ‘Wullie, ye maun keep your leg awa’ from your wicket.’ So I dropped the next ball on Wullie’s pad and appealed. ‘I tell’d ye hoo it wad be, Wullie,’ said the umpire; ‘ye’re oot.’ Now, Wullie’s pad was a foot away from the line of his stumps. That, as Macaulay says about Lord Marchmont, in the affair of hanging a Biblical critic, was ‘the worst action of a bad life.’ The temptation, as St. Augustine explains about his robbery of an orchard, was the sense of humour. The saint did not want the pears, and Wullie’s wicket I could have got at any moment.

* * *

Speaking of the hanging of Biblical critics, I cannot wholly commend Dr. Reich’s way of handling these gentlemen, in his articles on ‘The Bankruptcy of the Higher Criticism,’ in the *Contemporary Review*. Dr. Reich is a very clever man, and my heart is on his side, at least as regards many vagaries of some higher critics, both of Homer and of the Scriptures. They are too imaginative, too conjectural, too much under the influence of their own theories, and too little regulated by logic and common sense. The Rev. Henry Browne, S.J., in his *Handbook of Homeric Study*,¹ is a most lucid and candid critic, but perhaps he has omitted to ask himself, ‘What are the objections that may be urged against my arguments?’ If he would do that, in the case, for example, of the prominence of the dog and relative absence of the horse in the *Odyssey* as compared with the *Iliad*, he would gain new light on the subject. This is a trivial instance, but it is typical. Again, the fighting round the ships is ‘late’ in the *Iliad*, according to Father Browne, but it is alluded to and led up to in the first book of the *Iliad*, which, according to the Father, is the most ancient. Achilles asks his mother to pray to Zeus to cause this incident, and Zeus grants the prayer in Book XV. Will the learned Father say that the early allusion is a late interpolation? This is a guess in the style of the Biblical critics. We must ask who made the interpolation, when, how, and why? Whose interest was it to turn scattered pieces of ancient poetry into the existing long epic? How was he, or how were they, able to do it, what was their motive, what kind of

¹ Longmans.

audience was in their eye? I do not find that Father Browne suggests an explanation; yet, without an hypothesis, where are we? Even a schoolboy may ask himself these questions if he reads the *Handbook*. He will ask them if, like an unhappy boy of my kin, he has been set to read my *Homer and the Epic*, wherein are many queries never replied unto by higher critics. As to 'the Higher Criticism,' Dr. Reich's attack on it is rather blustering and popular. He seems to know so much of his subject that I wish he would buckle to it in earnest, not in a few magazine articles. There is more to be said on his side than a vain people supposes. Common sense and the sense of humour must both have their stroke in this battle. There is a glorious opportunity for a Pascal, a man of learning and urbane wit, but the wit of Dr. Reich does not closely resemble that of the author of *Les Lettres Provinciales*.

* * *

Mr. Warner writes on 'Cricket Reform' in the *Grand Magazine* for May like a Daniel come to judgment. How few now remember that sterling cricketer, Mr. Daniel! Since 1901, Mr. Warner, maturing in wisdom, has seen that a great deal is to be said for a modification of the rule about l.b.w. The legs were not intended by the framers of the extant rule to take the place of the bat in defending the wickets. Bowlers who can break and curl on perfect modern wickets deserve to be rewarded with something else than a defence conducted with the pads. Mr. Warner is also for a new ball after every hundred and fifty runs. A new ball is a joy to feel in the hand, and is a living and intelligent thing, with natural faculties of working, compared with a worn, battered ball with the seams effaced. On the variety of character in cricket-balls, see Major Trevor's amusing story (in *Pearson's* for May) of Joseph Bernstein a bounder, but a good fellow, who made bowling a means of social success. Though I cannot applaud his ambitions, there is much subtlety in the dissertation in the various characters of cricket-balls. Mr. Warner is also for increasing the proportions of the stumps, which have remained unaltered since 1817, a year in which wickets were not like billiard-tables. When we reflect on the many cases in which an extra coat of varnish would bring ball and stumps into contact, we see how much the bowler would gain by an inch added to the height or width, or both, of the stumps. As 'naebody prays for the puir deevil,' so few think of the poor bowler, expending eye and energy on a faultless pitch, and played away by aid of the pads, whenever he does make a ball break or

curl. One is weary of those prodigious treble centuries of our leading batsmen; let the bowler have his chance, and let the matches be played to a definite conclusion. To be sure the bowler has invented 'the swerve,' a boomerang-like process of the ball which is the despair of the unmathematical mind. How is it done? I remember doing the swerve trick, to the equal surprise of myself and the batsman, in distant youth, but this was an accident. Mr. Warner says that it can only be done with a new ball.

* * *

In the story of jugglery given above, one witness said that there was no spilt water on the ground. Mr. Hugh Clifford permits me to tell a similar story from his own experience. The juggler was a Malay, who stroked with his fingers the blade of a long knife or kris. Mr. Clifford saw water fall drop by drop from the blade, which became flaccid, like a strip of indiarubber. Thrown on the ground, it bounced about, but was a knife-blade again when lifted by the juggler. This looks like a clever case of 'palm-ing' a thin bag, full of water, for the knife-blade. But there was no water on the mat on which Mr. Clifford saw the drops falling!

ANDREW LANG.

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